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**ELIZABETH AND
THE ARCHDEACON**

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THE SILVER-GILT STANDARD

SPILLIKINS
SHIPS AND SEALING-WAX
A WAYFARER IN HUNGARY

ELIZABETH AND THE ARCHDEACON

BY
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PART I
BRAILTON

ELIZABETH AND THE ARCHDEACON

PART I BRAILTON

CHAPTER I

BRAILTON GRANGE, in spite of the picturesque second half of the name, makes no claim to antiquity. It was built in the middle of the nineteenth century by John Code, who made a fortune out of steel, a thing possible in those days. The fortune being sufficient for the purpose, John Code determined to become a country gentleman, a thing nobody wants to be now, though it was desirable in 1860. He purchased land, a good deal of it, and built a house which he called the Grange, believing no doubt that the name suggested long ownership by an ancient family. He employed the most esteemed architect of the time. The architect achieved size and an interior of spaciousness. The successors of the eminent architect and their disciples turn away their eyes from the Grange as the Psalmist did his from beholding vanity. They say 'Victorian' with a sniff,

and that settles the status of the house in the artistic world, for the word is a comprehensive condemnation. Yet there is a dignity about the rooms, especially about the square hall through which one passes by way of tall doors panelled in plate glass to a long flight of steps and thence across a gravelled sweep to a lawn adorned with stone urns on pedestals.

Round the hall hang the antlers of deers. Some of them are attached to the skin of the skulls of the original animals, stuffed skins, furnished with glass eyes. Some are merely skulls, white bones. Under the studded heads are brass plates with inscriptions on them, 'J. C. Carriemuir, 1875' or more often 'E. C. Carriemuir' or 'Craigavon' or elsewhere with later dates. The unstuffed skulls have similar inscriptions written in ink on the white bones. But the proportion of E. C.s to J. C.s is the same. J. C. was a deer stalker of energy and skill. E. C. did better than he did. This is noticeable, for in those days it was remarkable that a woman—E. C. stands for Elizabeth Code—should do better than a man on a Scottish moor with a rifle.

John Code, when he deserted the steel works, had one clear qualification for the part of country gentleman. He had an instinct for sport. He never succeeded in becoming a first-rate rider to hounds, but he was an excellent shot, slaying as many pheasants as his neighbours who had been brought up to the job, and doing equally well with a rifle on the Scottish mountains. Another qualification for his new life he rapidly acquired by marrying Elizabeth Kelmer, a lady who belonged to a family whose position in the county could not be denied. Unfortunately this

Elizabeth had only one child, and that child was a daughter, another Elizabeth.

This Elizabeth Code was the 'E. C.' of the inscriptions under the deers' heads and antlers. She inherited her father's sporting tastes as well as his property, landed property including the village of Brailton, and money enough safely invested to render her secure from the tribulations of most landlords in these later days. Elizabeth Code did not marry, preferring to devote her time and energy mainly to sport. The antlers were witnesses to her devotion. So were six excellent horses in the Grange stables and a large subscription to the local hunt. So were two other horses, undergoing training at the hands of Tom Guide, whose establishment, near Newmarket, was famous for turning out winners. Great hopes were entertained by Tom Guide, whose opinion was worth having, of the future of Miranda, a creature which might outpace her competitors even in the Derby itself.

On a fine morning at the beginning of May Elizabeth Code sat at her writing-table in the square hall with the antlers on the walls around her. She had breakfasted, heartily and healthily. She intended a little later to pay a visit to two foals, thoroughbreds, lanky babies of six weeks old or so. Before visiting the foals she intended to interview her cook. Elizabeth Code, here again inheriting from her father, liked good food and was wise enough to know that food, like most other things in life, will only be good in response to personal care and interest.

It would be foolish to pretend that Elizabeth Code is a beautiful or attractive woman. She is sixty-five years old. She has the lined, weather-beaten face of

one accustomed to face the English climate in the open. She has grizzled hair which no brushing ever makes lie down smoothly and becomingly. Elizabeth has no delusions whatever about her own appearance and makes no attempt to improve or modify it. She sat that morning at her writing-table in an old pair of corduroy riding-breeches, leather gaiters—though these and her boots were well polished—and a mustard coloured blouse. But Elizabeth has eyes which a man might notice with admiration, though not because they radiate sex appeal or ever did. The man who wants that in women's eyes would not look twice at Elizabeth's. They are admirable because they are clear, keen, wise and kindly, the eyes of a woman who is likely to know her own mind and get her own way without bullying other people.

She opened her letters.

There was one from Tom Guide reporting the condition of Miranda. There was one from a firm of stockbrokers, for Elizabeth—another inheritance from her father—took intelligent care of her money. There were three invitations and five appeals for subscriptions. There was a handsome blue envelope of rather more than the usual size, made of very thick paper. Across the flap in large black capital letters were the names Jane Green.

In a small street in Mayfair, a street which contains no ordinary shop, there is an unimposing but very exquisite establishment with the name Jane Green on a brass doorplate. Here Mrs. Halliday carries on an exclusive and expensive dressmaking business. The gowns with which she supplies her clients are the most beautiful creations in London. Her prices are the

highest. Duchesses who aspired to special elegance went to Mrs. Halliday for their dresses, and a 'Jane Green' frock gave distinction equal at least to a title to commoner women who desired to shine.

The name Jane Green was Mrs. Halliday's first and perhaps most original contribution to the building up of a highly successful business. She realized and said frankly that the 'Elise', 'Corisande', 'Aimee', touch in the dressmaking business was overdone. It had spread to the provinces, and as a means of attracting desirable customers was no longer of any value.

'What we want', she said, 'is something striking and distinctive, and that nowadays can only be got by going back to the commonplace.'

Elizabeth Code agreed with her.

It was necessary that Elizabeth Code should agree, because it was her money that set the business going and kept it going for a couple of lean years while Mrs. Halliday forced her way to the front of her profession. Elizabeth, though a cautious woman, put a good deal of money into the enterprise. She believed in Mrs. Halliday's abilities, and she felt that she owed Mrs. Halliday a good start. Tom Halliday, a gentleman rider, had died as the result of riding, or failing to ride, one of Elizabeth's horses in the Grand National. He left a widow who became Jane Green, and a child called Betty. Elizabeth, recognizing her responsibility and convinced of the widow's ability, produced the necessary money. It proved an excellent investment, as charitable actions often do.

It is not to be supposed that the 'Jane Green' envelope contained any proposal to make a dress for Elizabeth or any suggestion about a dress already

made or any appointment for a fitting. Nothing would have induced Elizabeth to wear a 'Jane Green' dress and she would have greatly disliked paying for one. Nor did the envelope contain a statement of accounts nor a cheque for a dividend. Inside it was a personal letter. Mrs. Halliday wrote to tell her patron and friend that a doctor, indeed two consecutive doctors, had said disquieting things about Betty's lungs. They advised that she should be taken abroad at once to a warmer climate. Mrs. Halliday, though a good mother, scoffed at the doctors, maintaining that Betty was a healthy girl, far better at school than gadding about in hot foreign places. And the business could not possibly be left at the very beginning of the season. Betty, who was just fifteen, could not be sent abroad alone.

Elizabeth took a different view. Betty was her god-daughter, and she was fond of the child. Like many people who have never been ill in their lives she had an immense respect, amounting almost to awe, for the pronouncements of doctors. All unknown things, according to the Latin tag, are terrific; and the ways of doctors were quite strange to Elizabeth. She wrote a firm answer to Mrs. Halliday, beginning 'My dear Millie'. She told her not to be a fool; that her child's life mattered more than the business; and that she was to take Betty off at once to some place where the sun shone hotly.

Millie Halliday was a wilful and masterful woman. Otherwise she would not have made a success of the Jane Green business. She had not the least intention of leaving her shop at the most critical time of the whole year, merely because two doctors, called in by

a schoolmistress, were fussing about Betty's lungs. She held that all doctors are fussy, and must be, because they earn the greater part of their daily bread by fussiness.

But Elizabeth also was a wilful and masterful woman and she believed in doctors, never having tried one. She also held the opinion, common among bachelors, that children, especially girls, are tender creatures, liable to die suddenly and requiring the utmost care. Mrs. Halliday, who had brought up Betty successfully to the age of fifteen, knew that of all living things a child is the toughest and can stand an enormous amount of neglect and ill-treatment without serious damage.

There was, plainly, opportunity for argument before Betty's future and that of the Jane Green business were settled.

Elizabeth opened another letter.

It was from the Bishop of Barminster and when she read it Elizabeth—already a little annoyed by the news of Betty's health—said 'Damn!' She said it distinctly and clearly, as if she really meant it.

It must not be supposed that Elizabeth disliked bishops in general or had any particular objection to the Bishop of Barminster. She regarded bishops as a necessary part of the Church, and the Church as a national recognition of Christianity, which is a good religion, suited to the needs of civilized people. She subscribed generously to properly established charities and her gardener had orders to supply the altar vases in Brailton Church with flowers, sent down every Saturday and arranged by the garden boy who carried them. When the bishop came to her neighbourhood

for a Confirmation or other good purpose she entertained him. She gave lunch to any archdeacon who came wandering her way and she asked the rector to dinner as often as a rector ought to be asked to dinner by the great lady of his parish. This devotion to the Church she inherited from her mother. John Code had originally been a Nonconformist, though he soon recognized that such an eccentricity would be impossible for a country gentleman. His general view of religion, adopted or inherited by his daughter, was that Christianity is fundamentally a sound thing, and therefore, like the British Constitution and other sound things, best left alone. That is to say, not interfered with by private doubts and speculations.

Yet Elizabeth said 'Damn!' when she read the bishop's letter, and said it so distinctly that her cousin Duckward Kelmer looked up. He was reading *The Times*, and *The Times* always interested him greatly. He was leaning far back in a soft-seated deep chair, and Duckward Kelmer was a man who appreciated comfort. Unlike his cousin he was beautifully dressed. No fashion-plate could have shown a straighter crease than his trousers. No artist could have conceived a better colour scheme than the harmonious contrast of his socks and tie. He was twenty years younger than Elizabeth and therefore of an age at which clothes are of very great importance. He had a gentle, patient expression of face, that of a man who has seen the folly of the world and learned to tolerate it.

Something really startling was required to rouse Duckward Kelmer when he was reading *The Times* after breakfast, but Elizabeth's 'Damn!' did it.

Elizabeth was sixty-five and had therefore grown up

at a time when swearing was not fashionable among young ladies, when indeed the really nice girl was not supposed even to hear a word like 'damn'. She had never acquired the habit of casual profanity and when she did swear she meant it. That was why Duckward, known to a wide circle of friends simply as 'Duck', looked up at the sound of her 'damn' and even pulled himself into a sitting position.

'Anything wrong with Miranda?' he asked.

Duckward did not really care very much about Miranda. He was interested in many other things, chiefly in the conduct of our national affairs, which seemed to him an entertaining comedy of a mildly diverting kind. Shortly after leaving Oxford he was successful in the most difficult examination yet devised by man, and won a post in the Home Office. From that on his career lay plain before him, a career with a K.C.B. and a pension at the end of it, with delightful opportunities for knowing all about everything as the years ambled quietly on. To a man with sufficient intelligence to appreciate the wriggings of Cabinet Ministers caught on hooks, the rise and fall of literary and artistic reputations, the scandals in the private lives of the great, and the progress of human folly towards no discernible goal. . . . To such a man the future of Miranda was a small matter. Yet, such was Duckward's catholicity of interests, the future of Miranda was something and his tone was not without sympathy when he asked about the mare.

'It's not Miranda,' said Elizabeth, 'it's the bishop.'

Duckward sat up straight and let *The Times* fall beside him. Here was an opportunity, one of the

opportunities he always welcomed, of showing that he knew all about everybody who was anybody.

'Let me see,' he said. 'Your man is Lymington-Lane, isn't he? I remember him at Balliol in my time. He rowed in the boat, I think. Inclined to be hearty, which rather put me off him, but a capital fellow. No brains, of course.'

Duckward Kelmer was fond of saying 'No brains, of course', especially about successful men. It may not always have been a fair thing to say, for some successful men are clever enough, but it gave pleasure to the sayer and impressed the hearer, two most desirable things in any remark.

'You may say what you like, Elizabeth,' he went on reflectively, 'but the Church is still a career. I don't see how else Lymington-Lane would ever have got into the House of Lords. And he's there, you know. He was next man up, and when old Hocking dropped off he stepped in. Next session he'll be reading prayers every day to the Lord Chancellor. I shall never be in the House of Lords'—here he sighed gently—'but if I'd gone into the Church—— Or perhaps not. I never could have achieved a really hearty manner.'

Elizabeth was fond of her cousin, but she very seldom listened to his monologues with any attention. They struck her as soothing and sometimes slightly amusing, but she never allowed them to divert her mind from the subject which occupied it.

'I can't think', she said, 'why old Richardson should have died. It was a totally unnecessary thing for a man in his position to do.'

Richardson, the Rev. Clement Richardson, was not a man of any eminence, being no more than a country

parson and rector of the parish of Brailton. Yet—such is omniscience—Duckward knew about him, not all about him perhaps but a good deal.

‘My dear Elizabeth,’ he said mildly, ‘the man was seventy-five at least.’

‘I don’t see that that’s any reason for dying.’

‘Not for you, of course,’ said Duckward. ‘Being a hundred when you are a hundred, won’t be any reason for your dying. Everybody knows you’ll never die. There was once a Countess of Desmond, seventeenth century I think, who lived to be a hundred and thirty, and then died as the result of a fall from the top of a cherry tree which she had climbed to gather a hatful of fruit. Simple carelessness on her part. I’m sure you always take reasonable precautions. Did old Richardson climb a tree?’

‘No. He caught pneumonia.’

‘And now you have to appoint his successor,’ said Duckward.

‘Exactly. It’s a nuisance. I don’t know a single parson.’

‘Oh, come now, don’t exaggerate. I saw you sitting beside the Dean of Westminster at one of the Prime Minister’s dinners last spring. You must have talked to him enough to say you know him.’

‘I can’t ask the Dean of Westminster to be Rector of Brailton. He’d think I’d gone mad if I did.’

‘Why not do as the bishop suggests?’ said Duckward. ‘I suppose that’s what he has written to you about.’

‘I don’t like the bishop butting in,’ said Elizabeth. ‘Brailton is my job, not his. I hate being bossed

by any one, especially a bishop. Why should he interfere?'

'It's a pretty good living, isn't it? Eight hundred a year or so?'

'A thousand,' said Elizabeth.

'Then you can't wonder at the bishop's butting in. My advice to you is to appoint his man. After all, bishops' secretaries are often quite nice fellows, trained to the house and all that.'

'Secretaries! Who's talking about secretaries?'

'The bishop is, I suppose. My dear Elizabeth, I have been watching appointments of all sorts for years and years, and I know exactly how they're all made. The bishops' secretaries always get anything good that's going in the Church, and quite right. What is wanted for a good job is a good man to do it, and if a man wasn't a good man he wouldn't be chosen as secretary by the bishop. That's the justification of the system and it's perfectly sound. What you'll do if you're wise is nominate whoever the bishop suggests.'

'For a man who's supposed to have brains, Duck——'

'Supposed?' said Duckward. 'I have brains. That's why my advice is so good.'

'For a man who's supposed to have brains', said Elizabeth with a noticeable emphasis on the word 'supposed', 'you talk more arrant nonsense than anyone I've ever listened to. Not that I do listen to you. As a matter of fact the bishop wants me to appoint a missionary archdeacon. Where's Badakak?'

'Badakak!' said Duckward, 'Badakak. You're probably thinking of Sarawak. It's in Borneo.'

Elizabeth referred to the bishop's letter.

'No,' she said. 'Badakak. The man's Archdeacon

of Badakak, or was. Where is Badakak? Not that it matters much.'

'Very likely in Borneo too,' said Duckward. 'Or perhaps Java. Places ending in ak are generally somewhere in that part of the world. That's where the head-hunters ply their pleasant craft. I wonder if the bishop's friend has been converting them. Ticklish job, I should think. While you're trying to get at his heart he has a hungry eye on your head. A man who has converted any considerable number of head-hunters ought to be worth knowing. I don't wonder the bishop recommends him.'

'Anyhow I'm not going to appoint him to Brailton,' said Elizabeth. 'What on earth should I do with a missionary archdeacon?'

'Quite out of place in Brailton. I agree. Quite.'

'I never get on well with archdeacons of any kind.'

'I'm sure you don't,' said Duckward. 'If it had been a secretary now—— But a missionary archdeacon would be almost certain to denounce betting from the pulpit and then what about your little flutter on Miranda? By the way, what are the present odds against Miranda?'

'Forty to one,' said Elizabeth. 'But they'll shorten. Get on at once if you mean to get on at all.'

'I don't,' said Duckward, 'at those odds or any other—I never bet. But fellows in the office and in the club are always asking me. They think that because I'm your cousin I'm bound to know whether the creature will win or not. Amazingly foolish most men are, especially fellows in clubs. Even bishops have very little sense. Or perhaps I should say especially bishops. I can't imagine how Lymington-

Lane ever came to imagine you'd appoint a missionary archdeacon, establish at your very door a fellow who'd want to convert you. Nothing could be more unpleasant. And he'd be almost sure to try it. That's what he's been at all his life. . . . Head-hunters and so on. It would be almost impossible for him to break off the habit now.'

CHAPTER II

THE Bishop of Barminster, though he had never got over the heartiness which Duckward Kelmer deplored, was a thoroughly good man. He was not a scholar but he was by no means devoid of intelligence and he liked to think that he took a statesmanlike view of the affairs of the Church. This meant that he took no interest in the theories of biblical critics, and very little in current controversies on morality, such as the advisability of birth control and the legitimacy of divorce. He did take an interest, a deep and statesmanlike interest in the affairs of the Church in regions which he described comprehensively as 'overseas'. The great missionary societies had no firmer friend than the Bishop of Barminster and he was always ready to take the chair at their meetings, even at the cost of some personal inconvenience.

It was through the Reverend Kenilworth Allworthy, secretary of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation that the Bishop of Barminster first heard of Simon Craven of Badakak. He heard a good deal, for the Rev. Kenilworth Allworthy was a good secretary and kept in touch with the Corporation's missionaries in foreign parts. He knew all there was to know about Simon, and wrote out most of it for the bishop's instruction. It was all to Simon's credit.

As a young man Simon Craven devoted himself to the task of converting the people of Badakak. It was difficult and trying work. The Badakakians displayed a singular pertinacity in clinging to their ancestral customs, which were of a most deplorable kind. They lived either in swamps or jungles. Instead of killing dangerous snakes they tried to placate them with acts of worship, saying prayers to the worst of them and thus promoting them to the position of gods. They regarded the mosquitoes which swarmed in their swamps as part of the divine order of things and supposed that they existed for some good purpose. Few white men survived any considerable period of residence in Badakak ; but then most white men who went there developed a taste for piwong, a potent spirit distilled by the natives from plantain leaves and immature coconuts. Simon Craven, though not a fanatical teetotaller, never touched piwong, though the Badakakians, who became fond of him after a time, brought him large gourds full of the stuff by way of presents. Almost the only form of present possible to them, for they were not a rich people. Whether it was owing to his abstinence from piwong or to a singularly good constitution, or to the fact that snakes and mosquitoes, recognizing a good man when they saw one, never bit him, or—as the secretary of the Corporation thought—to the special protection of Providence, Simon Craven survived for twenty years.

During that time he established a school. He chose a particularly pestiferous swamp for the site of it ; for he was a man whose sympathies always went out to the bottomest dogs he could find, and in the inhabitants of that swamp were a most degraded set of people.

After that he built a church in a jungle and taught a large number of Badakakians to sing 'Hark! the herald angels' in their own language, but to the familiar tune composed by Mendelssohn. There was no harmonium, so the singing was accompanied by beating on the small drums used by the natives at all musical festivals. After a while Simon Craven discovered that the drums were made of human skulls with tanned skin, also human, stretched over them. Such instruments seemed out of place in Christian worship so he forbade their use and from that on the church music was unaccompanied.

After a while Simon saw that the church, which had given birth to several daughter churches, might fittingly be turned into a cathedral. He pulled it down. This was quite an easy thing to do, for it was built with bamboos and roofed with leaves. Instead of it he built, chiefly with his own hands a very much larger edifice. He would have liked a bell, but that was impossible, so he fitted up an aeolian harp which could be made to wail loudly whenever the wind blew by opening a shutter made of palm leaves. It was an ingenious machine and even the unconverted natives preferred it to the drums which had till then been their only musical instruments.

The building of a cathedral, even if it is only built of bamboo and has an aeolian harp instead of a bell, is something of an event in the Church overseas. The bishop who episcopated in that part of the world awoke to the fact that some reward ought to be given to Simon Craven. Like the Badakakians he had not much to give, but he willingly gave what he could. He made Simon an archdeacon, the first archdeacon

of the newly created archdeaconry of Badakak. This was a mistake, and the bishop, who was a very busy man and given to acting without proper consideration, found out the mistake almost at once. The builder of a cathedral ought to be made a dean, not an archdeacon. But by the time the bishop realized what he had done it was too late to make any change. Simon was recognized as an archdeacon in the offices of the parent society at home. The Rev. Kenilworth Allworthy sent a note of the appointment to Lambeth, where it was duly registered. The new cathedral had to get on as best it could without a dean.

Then a tornado struck Badakak. There was nothing unusual about that, for tornadoes are as common there as May frosts are in England. Beyond grumbling a little no one took any notice of them. But this was a very bad tornado and it did serious damage, a thing difficult even for a tornado in Badakak where there is very little that can be damaged. It blew away the shutter which shielded the aeolian harp in the cathedral. The instrument gave a loud and terrifying shriek, its last sound, and was then shattered to pieces.

The Badakakians, converted and unconverted, said that it was the loss of the aeolian harp which affected the archdeacon's health. Unkind and jealous people hinted that he had at last taken to piwong. A doctor in a coast town talked about mosquitoes, and another doctor, who had landed from a passing steamer, said the same thing except that he called the mosquitoes by a longer name, much more difficult to pronounce. Everybody agreed that Simon Craven had completely broken down and that the only thing for him was to

go home, by which they meant England, though England, after twenty years in Badakak, could scarcely be regarded as his home in any ordinary sense of the word.

The bishop, the local bishop, feeling that an archdeaconry was after all an inadequate reward for twenty years' work in Badakak, wrote to the Rev. Kenilworth Allworthy, secretary of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation, and said that Simon Craven should be adequately provided for when he got to England. Allworthy quite agreed with him and cast a comprehensive eye round the Church of England, which he knew well, to discover a suitable post for the Archdeacon of Badakak. He noticed at once that there was a vacant prebendal stall in Barminster Cathedral. It was in the gift of the bishop and was plainly a suitable post for a missionary archdeacon broken in health. The income, though not large was sufficient, and Simon Craven had some private means. The duties were light, probably as light as any duties in the world. The dignity was pleasant without being burdensome, and the stall was in the gift of the Bishop of Barminster who beyond all others advocated the claims of the Church overseas. So suitable did the arrangement seem that Allworthy regarded it as settled.

The bishop, who is a very good man, recognized at once that an archdeacon who had been in Badakak for twenty years ought to be provided for. But, though devoted to the interests of the Church overseas, he was also a bishop of the Church at home. There were men in his own diocese, a former secretary of his own in particular, who had, or might be thought to have, claims on that stall. The bishop felt himself to

be in a difficult position. Then, fortunately and just in the nick of time, old Clement Richardson of Brailton died, leaving vacant a very pleasant country parish with little work to do and an income of a thousand a year, a distinctly better income than that of the prebendal stall.

The parish was unfortunately not in his gift. Miss Elizabeth Code was the patron. But the bishop thought he could persuade her to accept the archdeacon. He was very good at persuading people to do things which they had no great objection to doing. And he did not see why Miss Code should object to the archdeacon. So far as he knew she had no strong views on Church matters, being neither Anglo-Catholic nor Evangelical. Indeed, she had never taken any particular interest in Church affairs, though she subscribed to most things with laudable generosity. It seemed likely that she would accept the bishop's nominee without protest. He wrote her a letter, a very tactful letter, as all the bishop's letters were and awaited her reply without misgiving.

Elizabeth Code, as has been told, said 'Damn!' when she read the letter.

She wrote an answer which, though friendly, was definite. She did not want a missionary archdeacon at Brailton.

The bishop was not seriously troubled by Elizabeth's refusal to follow his advice. He was accustomed to such rebuffs and never regarded them as final. Experience had taught him that a great deal can be done by patience and persistence. He did not feel that he need even contemplate giving the archdeacon the vacant canonry in Barminster Cathedral. Mr.

Allworthy went on suggesting this, for he too was a persistent man. But no bishop has as much patronage as he ought to have, and must use what he has to the best advantage. It is far better, if at all possible, to provide for deserving missionaries without frittering away the little a bishop has to give. In fact, to do what plainly ought to be done at somebody else's expense.

The bishop wrote another letter to Elizabeth in which he said that he would value an opportunity of talking the whole matter over with her. He also said that the great thing to be considered was the needs of the parish. Perhaps, so he suggested, Miss Code might find out, informally, what the feelings of the leading people in Brailton were.

The bishop, who was by no means a fool, knew exactly what the people in Brailton wanted. So did Elizabeth. If the Brailton villagers had been articulate enough to express their wishes, and brave enough to lay them before the bishop or Elizabeth they would ask for a rector who would conduct the church services on Sundays decorously but without bothering anybody to go to them who did not want to. Further they would have asked for a man who would see to it that the cricket ground was kept properly mowed and rolled ; who would be prepared, at short notice, to give a lecture at the Women's Institute, when, as often happened, the lecturer engaged for the occasion got into the wrong bus and arrived at some other village ; who would subscribe a reasonable sum whenever anything unusual was wanted, such as a new piano for the parish room or an extra charabanc for the mothers' annual outing ; who would get up a satisfactory number

of whist drives, dances and 'socials' during the winter months ; who would be good at finding situations for boys and girls when they left school, situations within five miles of Brailton, where good wages were paid and very little work asked in return ; who would—but the bishop did not go on making the list of the qualifications which the people of the country parish regard as desirable in a rector. He knew it all well, and was a warm supporter of every scheme devised by the Church Assembly for giving the parishioners a voice in the appointment of their pastor. Elizabeth Code knew the list too, and because she knew it would have opposed the Church Assembly's legislation, if she had ever heard of it.

Having suggested the desirability of talking things over, after Miss Code had consulted the village people, the bishop said that he would be in London during the early part of May. It was his duty—he put this into the letter with some satisfaction and not without a hope of impressing Elizabeth—it would be his duty then to read prayers in the House of Lords.

CHAPTER III

IN the course of the next week Elizabeth received sixty-four applications for the parish, and more kept pouring in by every post. She began to be slightly worried. It was clearly impossible for her to make a selection from such a number, particularly as she could not distinguish between a 'Moderate Catholic', a 'Prayerbook Catholic', a 'Liberal Catholic', an 'Anglo-Catholic' and a simple 'Catholic'. One man described himself in this unqualified way. She did not even know what old Mr. Richardson had been. That would have been some guide to her, for she had no wish to disturb the parish in any way and wanted nothing better than to let things go on as they had gone in times past.

She was, too, much interested at the moment in her struggle with Millie Halliday, which was being carried on in a series of vigorous letters. Elizabeth was certain that she would get her own way in the end, but until the thing was settled she could not interest herself greatly in the future Rector of Brailton.

She wrote to Duckward Kelmer for advice.

He replied in a flippant letter. A Government Board had lately found itself faced with the task of choosing a new inspector—salary £300 a year—out of 205 applicants, all equally well qualified. The names of the 205, written on separate pieces of paper were put

into a hat and drawn out by a blindfolded clerk. The inspector so chosen turned out to be most satisfactory, and there was a scheme under consideration for managing all Government patronage in this way for the future. Duckward suggested that she should choose the new rector in this way.

Elizabeth replied with terse vigour.

'My dear Duck. Don't pretend to be a fool when you're not. This is a Church appointment, and even if you haven't a conscience I have. Come down for the weekend and tell me what to do.'

Next morning there came a letter from the bishop, written on House of Lords notepaper. He told Elizabeth the story of the aeolian harp in the Badakak Cathedral. It was a pathetic tale and might have moved Elizabeth if it had not happened that the same post brought a particularly irritating letter from Mrs. Halliday, who was still holding out about taking Betty abroad.

She told the bishop that a man as musical as Simon evidently would be miserable in Brailton, because the schoolmistress played the organ and the choir always sang out of tune.

On Friday evening Duckward arrived, bringing a frightened-looking young woman with him.

'Miss Jenkinson,' he said, introducing her.

Elizabeth greeted her politely and looked her over carefully. Her face was pale and thin. Her manner was nervous. Her clothes were cheap. It was plain that Duckward had not brought her down to introduce her as his future wife. If Duckward ever married, which seemed unlikely, it would be some one very different from this girl. Later on, when Miss Jenkinson

had been sent upstairs to her bedroom, Duckward explained her.

'A secretary,' he said, 'I got her straight out of a kind of school where they train them. Highest recommendations and so on. Phenomenal shorthand speed. Two thousand words a minute, or perhaps it was two hundred. I can't remember. Something striking anyhow.'

'I never knew you had a secretary,' said Elizabeth.

'I haven't. She's yours. Entirely yours.'

'My dear Duck, I don't want a secretary. Never had such a thing in my life. What am I going to do with her? You'd better take her back again when you leave.'

'All the best people have secretaries,' said Duckward.

'I don't care whether they do or not. I won't.'

'If you won't put the names of those parsons into a hat as I advised you——'

'I won't.'

'Very well then. The only other thing to do is to make a card index of them with cross-references of their qualifications, opinions and peculiarities. You can't do that yourself. Nor can I. Miss Jenkinson can. She's been taught to. There are sixty-four, you said.'

'There were sixty-four when I wrote to you. There are a hundred and one now.'

'Have you answered all their letters?'

'Of course I haven't. How could I when I'm writing every day to that obstinate little fool, Millie Halliday?'

'Exactly,' said Duckward. 'Just what I expected. That's where Miss Jenkinson comes in. She's been

taught to answer letters. "Yours of the 12th ult. to hand with enclos. as advised." That sort of thing.'

'Oh, very well then. Let her get at the job. I don't mind her answering the letters, but what's the card index supposed to be for?'

'That', said Duckward, 'we shall send to the Lord Chancellor when completed. He has an enormous amount of Church patronage, more than any man in England, and he knows exactly what to do in the case of a vacant parish. A careful and conscientious man, the Lord Chancellor. He keeps a secretary especially for that job.'

'If you think I'm going to hand over the appointment to the Lord Chancellor you're mistaken. I'd as soon give it to the bishop.'

And the bishop might have had it if he had not written another letter pressing more strongly than ever the claims of the Archdeacon of Badakak. Being a sensible man with a knowledge of human nature, he would not have written this letter of his own accord. He knew that the worst way of persuading a woman like Elizabeth Code to do anything is to badger her. But the Rev. Kenilworth Allworthy was badgering him and the prebendal stall was given away. The bishop, whose conscience was badgering him nearly as much as Allworthy was, wrote to Elizabeth, but against his better judgement.

He made the letter as tactful as he could, and that, as any one who knows him will easily understand, was very tactful indeed. He pointed out that the establishment of an aeolian harp in a cathedral is no proof that the priest responsible is musical, quite the contrary. A harp of that kind is the easiest of all instruments to

play because the wind does the work without human intervention. A musical man, the sort of man not suited to Brailton, would have had a harmonium or, if he could not get that, an ordinary harp, not aeolian.

The letter, a long one, went on to describe the arrangements made by Simon Craven to prevent the crocodiles from raiding the school he had established. The Badakakian swamps are infested with these reptiles, and if Simon had not been a particularly tender-hearted man, the children would have been eaten in dozens before the very eyes of their teachers. It was, of course, Allworthy who told the bishop about the glaxis, set with spikes, which Simon had built round his school. The bishop handed on the information to Elizabeth because he thought that such care for those whom he described as 'our little ones' would touch the heart of any womanly woman. He hoped that Elizabeth was womanly, though she did own a Derby favourite.

Elizabeth might have been moved, for the thought of a school overrun by hungry crocodiles is touching, even if the children are Badakakian and probably black. Besides, a man with spirit enough to construct a spike-set glaxis appealed to her. She might then and there have given way to the bishop if a telegram from Tom Guide had not arrived which brought the awful news that Miranda had developed an unexpected and unaccountable strain in her off foreleg.

That, naturally enough, put everything else out of Elizabeth's head. Miss Jenkinson, who came in with a bundle of letters for signature, was sent away with an order not to make a nuisance of herself. The girl, since there were no more letters to answer, went on with her card index. Instead of effacing herself, which

any girl with tact would have done, she came back to ask whether a man who described his theological views in the words 'Linen Vestments' was to be classed as a 'Moderate', 'Prayer Book', 'Liberal', or unqualified 'Catholic'. That question, asked at such a moment—Elizabeth had just got Tom Guide on the telephone—settled the fate of the bishop's last appeal. She sent him an ill-tempered, indeed almost rude telegram:

'I hope the crocodiles climbed the fence stop
ELIZABETH CODE.'

The bishop took this as a Christian man should take all insults, with unprotesting gentleness. He even, such was his magnanimity, understood how the message came to be sent when he heard what had happened to Miranda, from a Cabinet Minister who lunched with him in the Athenæum.

He wrote a short note to Elizabeth saying he was sorry to hear that one of her horses had met with an accident. Very few men, after receiving the rude and heartless crocodile telegram would have written such a letter. It ought, and at any ordinary time would, have secured the parish for Simon Craven. Such is the power of a soft answer in turning away wrath. But Miranda's strain was getting no better and the odds against her were lengthening every day. Elizabeth, though she sent no more telegrams, blamed the bishop for depressing Miranda's place in the betting list by gossiping in the Athenæum. His sympathetic letter was briefly acknowledged by Miss Jenkinson, and Simon's chances of getting the parish were as small as Miranda's of winning the Derby.

The bishop was not the only one who suffered. Millie Halliday got a letter of so fierce a kind that she went straight out to the nearest tourist office and asked for tickets to some place where the sun shone every day and which was a long way from London. The tourist agent, a man of sound knowledge of his job, saw his way to making a little money out of such a traveller. He worked out a route to Corsica and engaged rooms in the Palace Hotel Calvi for Mrs. Halliday and daughter.

Duckward Kelmer made other engagements for his week-ends and did not go near Brailton Grange until after the Derby was over. Miranda failed even to start ; but by this time the bitterness of death was past and Elizabeth had returned to her normal temper.

PART II

CALVI

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CALVI

CHAPTER I

THE P. & O. s.s. *Vishnubrahma* slipped swiftly westward along the rocky coast between Toulon and Marseilles. The day—a day in the latter part of May—was fine, and the sun shone brilliantly. The sea was almost perfectly calm. The captain felt safe in keeping close to the shore, thereby shortening the distance he had to travel by several miles and, a secondary consideration, giving his passengers a good view of a very beautiful stretch of coast. They made the best of their opportunity, gathering on the star-board side of the upper deck.

Already they had begun to feel the fever of restlessness which attacks passengers when the end of a voyage, or even the end of a stage of a voyage, is drawing near. Players of quoits and deck tennis forsook their games and lounged against the rail, staring landwards at rocky headlands close at hand, or peering with their glasses into deep bays where the little French watering-places lay. Already the beaches were gay with striped tents and passengers, contemplating future holidays, told each other what the hotels were like and asked questions about the golf

links. Loungers in deck-chairs, incurable so far in their laziness, fidgeted, got up, sat down again, and allowed the novels they had borrowed from the ship's library, to lie untouched on the deck beside them.

Those who knew the coast rose suddenly into positions of eminence, and interested groups gathered round them. They were able to say, and everybody wanted to hear, that the ship was now passing Bandol, or that a huge range of buildings, dimly discernible at the end of the bay was the hotel at Le Ciotat.

'Not a bad hotel. Cousin of mine stayed there last year with the children. French, of course. No proper breakfast, but you can't expect everything.'

The information given, the geographical part of it, was generally wrong, and it might have been had correctly from any map, but the men who were able to give it gathered audiences round them and had a pleasing sense of their own importance.

Good-natured young men who had been assiduous in playing with the children on board, giving them swings and setting them to run races, deserted their pets and wandered about, inquiring from each other and from anyone who would listen to them, at what hour the ship would reach Marseilles. The children, missing their playfellows, turned fractious and the nursemaids in charge of them had a troubled time, all the more trying because they too felt the loss of the attentions of the young men who had brightened their lives as well as those of their charges.

Women who had not spoken to each other during the whole length of the voyage suddenly thawed, discussed intimate details of their packing and discovered that they had friends in common.

'The Hansons, of course. How interesting that you should know them. I was at school with Carrie. That was before she married, of course.'

This was a most satisfactory discovery, until it turned out that the Hansons of whom Carrie had become one by marriage were a different set of Hansons altogether. The link of common friendships was broken as abruptly as it had been formed; but not the new friendship based on it. That endured until the ship reached Marseilles and was broken there only with promises of swift and permanent renewal 'at home'.

Men who had been shy of each other all the way through the Red Sea and from Port Said across the Mediterranean, offered each other cocktails, and in drinking them each man discovered that the other really had a right to 'sport' the Old Marlburian tie or the Rugby blazer which had been a cause of suspicious dislike during the voyage. It had not appeared likely that the other man had been at any decent school. Assured by reference, perhaps to 'Pot-belly Thompson', perhaps to 'Sata Roberts', that the tie-wearer was really one of the elect, friendship followed. One cocktail succeeded another, with much signing of chits presented by the deck steward, and intimacy ripened fast.

The ship reached the cluster of islands which lies outside the eastward entrance of Marseilles harbour. The fever of restlessness among the passengers reached an acuter stage. Suit-cases, packed and strapped, were dragged on deck, prematurely and vainly, for the cabin stewards came and took them away again. Things forgotten were discovered, pyjamas tucked

under pillows, brushes stored in drawers. Straps had to be unstrapped, keys fitted to locks, bulging suit-cases reopened and shut with fresh difficulty. Husbands complained with bitterness that their wives always left packing to the last moment, so creating confusion and fuss. Wives retorted with dangerously icy politeness that it was impossible for them to pack at all when part of their luggage had been removed.

'You know, darling, that I always put my dressing-gown into your suit-case. There's simply nowhere else it will go. And you've taken that case away, not half full.'

'Can't have your dressing-gown in my suit-case. Blocks up the whole thing. Why will women lug about such huge dressing-gowns?'

'Dearest, it's always gone in your case. It was you who suggested it. I wanted to buy another case.'

'Cases enough already. Cost a small fortune in porters.'

'Oh, all right, darling. Of course if you'd rather I carried it over my arm when we land——'

Stewards, cabin stewards, table stewards, bath stewards, deck stewards, smoking-room stewards, lurked in every corner, at every doorway. Tipping time approached and they were determined not to let a single passenger escape. The most hardened and experienced travellers consulted each other about the amount of payments which should be made, inclining, if they were men, to unnecessary lavishness, if women, to reckon the value of the service rendered.

'My stewardess never did a single thing for me except wake me up when I was comfortably asleep

with a sloppy cup of tea and a green apple. I really don't see why I should give her more than——'

'Oh, very well, my dear,' this is the husband, rendered snappy by the sudden discovery of an unpacked pair of trousers. 'Very well. Give her whatever you like. Only what I always say is that if you're going to do a thing at all it's better to do it decently.'

'Of course I'm going to do it decently. Only what is the use of absolutely throwing money away. She can't expect more than—— Have you any change?'

'No, I haven't. And I don't see where I'm going to get any. The purser's cleared out. Everybody is asking for change.'

'I am not going to give that woman a pound and I've nothing less.'

'Don't tip her at all then, and see what she looks like.'

'Dear, don't be nasty to me or I will cry. Of course I mean to tip her.'

So the close ties of family affection are jarred by this same end-of-journey fever which, oddly enough, creates new ties through the discovery of mutual friends and the legitimate wearing of old school blazers.

Of all the passengers there was perhaps only one unaffected in the slightest degree by the fever which afflicted all the rest. The Rev., indeed the Venerable Simon Craven, completing the last stage of his long journey home from Badakak, might well have been excited. He had more to be excited about in going home than any colonel on leave, any civil servant released from the toils of office, any subaltern with

still fresh memories of England, or any young wife with a babe to display to grandparents who had only heard of it. Yet Simon Craven was depressed and a little frightened. He had no one to squabble with and even amid that general effusiveness made no friends. He had been alone all through the voyage and remained solitary to the very end.

This was partly, indeed chiefly, his own fault. He had been shy and diffident as a boy, shy and diffident at Oxford, lamentably lacking in heartiness during the two years he held an English curacy. He had never been able to slap a fellow-man on the back with friendly cheerfulness. There are those who can take a girl, or even a middle-aged woman, by the arm and lead her apart from the crowd at a jumble sale, increasing the pressure of their fingers to a gentle squeeze. Simon had envied but could not imitate them. Twenty years among the Badakakian tribes had done nothing to fit him for English social life. He was afraid of his fellow-passengers, of those of his own age because he felt that they were in some way his superiors and sure to look down on him, of those who were young because they spoke a language they did not understand and did things to which he was wholly unaccustomed.

Chance had not thrust him into any forced companionship. The ship was not full and Simon had his cabin, a humble and cramped box on a lower deck, entirely to himself. At meals his place was at the end of one side of a table. The chair next his was vacant. The chair opposite might have been filled, but seldom was, because the lady allotted to it was seasick during almost the whole voyage, only appear-

ing when the sea was quite calm, and even then pallid and disinclined to speak.

Simon was far too self-distrustful to push himself into the company of those who played deck games, and though he looked timidly into the smoking-room at cocktail times, he never ventured to seat himself on one of the leather-covered chairs. He had a feeling that his entry might be regarded as a kind of intrusion to be stigmatized as that dreadful thing 'cheek'.

Oddly enough, his fellow-passengers were nearly as much afraid of him as he was of them. It had been very early recognized by his appearance that he was a parson of some sort. That was nothing against him. There was not a colonel on board who would not cheerfully have stood a drink to a chaplain of the Indian Establishment and swapped stories with him. Such a parson is recognized to be a man and a brother in spite of the collar he occasionally wears. Every young man and every young girl would have welcomed an ordinary padre to share in the games and dances on deck. Anti-clerical feeling may exist among superior people at home, people who sit in the seats of the learned in minor colleges or write books which their friends review in the Sunday papers, which sometimes even the friends shrink from touching. They then review them themselves. Among the more virile though of course far less intelligent men and women who keep the Empire going in distant lands there is no prejudice against the clergy. Simon, had he been a priest of any accustomed kind, would have been welcome enough.

Unfortunately, inquiries from the purser, inquiries made early in the voyage, revealed an embarrassing

fact. Simon Craven was a missionary and a missionary of an unusually devoted kind, one who had risen to eminence in his profession and become an archdeacon. No one on board the ship had ever met a missionary and no one felt certain how such a creature might behave or how he should be treated.

The 'pukka sahib' class to which Anglo-Indian military officers and civilians belong possesses almost all the virtues there are. Your 'sahib', if really 'pukka', is a man of unblemished honour, of high personal courage, both physical and moral, ready at any moment to sacrifice himself for the sake of the Empire, or duty, or humanity at large. He is of a friendly disposition and is not given to severe condemnation of his neighbours' faults. He is quite the most admirable man the English race has yet produced, which is the same thing as saying the most admirable man there is or ever has been in the world. But he is afflicted with a kind of shyness which makes him hold aloof from those he does not know, especially from those who are not recognizably 'pukka sahibs'. It is not that he regards these others as members of an inferior caste, untouchables, rightly to be despised. There is very little of that kind of feeling in him. But he does not know how to behave in their company. He does not speak their language or they his. Therefore, more from fear of making a fool of himself than from any other reason, he holds aloof from strange people, from intellectuals, artists, musicians and of course missionaries, from people inspired by ideals which may be and no doubt are admirable, but are incomprehensible.

Thus, colonels and administrators were doubtful

about the possibility of friendly intercourse with a devoted and successful missionary, a man who spent his time in converting 'natives'.

'What I always say about natives is this: and mind you I've spent my life among them and I ought to know. What I say is this: You've got to take the native as you find him and it's no damned use treating him as if he were anything else except a native.'

That—said in those or other like words—expressed the general view of the older men. It kept them aloof from Simon Craven. The feeling of the young was different, but led to the same result. Religion to the younger Englishman, unless he happens to be an intellectual, is one of the things which he regards as 'all right': but there is kind of religion which he describes as 'pi', and of it he has a deep and generally well-grounded distrust. A missionary is almost certain to be 'pi'. Indeed, if a man were not excessively 'pi' it is unlikely that he would be a missionary.

Yet behind this shyness and distrust there was among his fellow-passengers a certain respect for Simon. According to the purser he was a man who had done his job unusually well. And the purser was certainly right. Simon's name was printed in the passenger list with the word 'Venerable' in front of it and 'Archdeacon of Badakak' in brackets after it. This was, so every sahib judged, as if D.S.O. had been put after a soldier's name or M.V.O. after that of a civilian. It meant, as all such titles mean, that a man had done his job well, or at the very least to the satisfaction of his superiors. It may be a poor kind of job in itself, or even objectionable, but whatever it is the man who does it well is entitled to respect.

Unfortunately respect is just one of the things which widen existing gaps among men. If Simon had been less respected and less plainly worthy of respect he might have made a few friends on board the *Vishnu-brahma*. Being respected, he made none, and arrived at Marseilles as lonely as he was when he left Bombay.

CHAPTER II

IN the long shed on the quay at which the steamer berthed stood the train ready for its rush across the Continent to the channel port. Brown uniformed attendants stood at the doors of the coaches devoted to sleeping carriages. Through the windows of the restaurant car could be seen little tables decked with flowers and wine-bottles, each promising the excellent meals which the French, alone of peoples, are able to provide on railway journeys. In the *douane* were the usual long tables marked with placarded black letters, A, B, C, . . . Behind them, nonchalant or indifferent, were the custom-house officers, ready to pass the luggage of these passengers almost without examination. What need to guard against smuggling by people who would only set foot on the soil of France on a quay at Marseilles and a pier at Calais? Even the women searchers, grimmest and most forbidding of created things, seemed to realize that here they had no work to do.

The passengers, their suit-cases marked with mystic chalk, passed rapidly to their train, crowded round the entrances of the coaches, argued in bad French with the attendants, who for the most part spoke excellent English, and driven on by an impulse for haste when there was no need for any hurry, jostled and pushed. Even the firmest of new-made friends

were inclined to be rude to each other, all moved by a frenzied desire not to be the last to board the train.

Quite at the end of the struggling procession through the *douane* came Simon Craven. He carried his own two suit-cases, one in each hand, for the French porters, who think themselves judges of the tipping habits of passengers, passed him by. He looked meek and down-trodden, from their point of view unworthy of attention. There they were wrong, as men who have had no proper training in psychology often are. Simon's shyness made him a lavish tipper. He often gave twice the proper fee, and the porter with a hectoring manner could easily have got double that again, at least three times what he would have got from a self-confident colonel, four times what he would have got from the colonel's wife.

Simon, his two cases duly chalked, reached the further shed where the train stood. He became involved in the seething crowd of his fellow-passengers. A sudden spasm of extreme diffidence and shyness seized him. In that train he would be forced into close companionship with men and women whom he feared, who, as he thought, disliked and despised him. He might have to sleep in a cabin with some dominating colonel with a heavy white moustache. He might have to sit at a little table, close, inevitably very close, to one of the young men or maidens whose very laughter frightened him. In fact the colonel, a kindly soul, would have been friendly and helpful. In fact the young man would have called him 'Sir' respectfully, and the maiden would have smiled at him. But Simon Craven could not guess that.

He stood irresolute, and while he hesitated a voice sounded close to him.

'Sair, Hotel Bristol, sair, if you please.'

A hand was laid on one of his suit-cases, and from very feebleness and irresolution his own grasp relaxed. A hotel porter in a peaked cap decked with much gold braid, stood beside him smiling.

'Autobus outside, sair, please. Good hotel. I conduct you.'

And he did. The second suit-case was taken away, and Simon, bewildered, wondering, but relieved in mind, followed his guide. With daring and extreme agility the hotel porter dodged among the trucks and stray passenger coaches which lay about the shed. He squeezed in between a wagon and the buffers of a steaming engine. He ignored the most ferocious-looking gensd'armes. He had no respect whatever for any of the passengers of the *Vishnubrahma* who got in his way. With a fierce cry of 'Pardon' he jostled them aside, kicking their bags away when they obstructed him. Every now and then he looked round to see if his prize was still in tow. Each time he did so he greeted Simon with a smile of proud protectiveness. If his English had been a little better he would have said, 'Trust me. All obstacles melt before my triumphal progress.'

The bus of the Hotel Bristol, its ownership proclaimed in large letters on its side, stood waiting. Simon, not fully understanding what had happened, allowed himself to be pushed in. His suit-cases, scarcely less animated and self-willed than he, were pushed in after him. The gold-capped porter, otherwise clad in clothes of disreputable shabbiness,

climbed up beside the driver. With immense clanging of a decrepit but still powerful engine, the thing started.

The driver, like all French chauffeurs, delighted in speed. The streets through which he drove were, like all streets in Marseilles, designed to test and if possible to break the springs of vehicles. Simon bounced up and down like a ball played with by a vigorous child, hitting the seat hard many times, and the roof, not quite so hard, at least twice. The sense of relief grew stronger in him. He felt the joy of escape. The bus might be and was exceedingly uncomfortable. The Hotel Bristol, for all the gold braid on the porter's cap, might be an inferior tavern. Simon knew nothing about that. But at least he would not have to sit beside a sneering subaltern and a giggling girl at meals, or put on his pyjamas under the austere gaze of a scornful silent colonel.

The energetic hotel porter proved his efficiency to the last. When the bus drew up before the hotel door in the Rue Cannebière he leaped from his seat, opened the door and took Simon firmly by the arm. He was evidently determined to prevent the escape of his captive passenger. Simon was led in and handed over to a stately concierge who sat in the small hall behind a semicircular mahogany counter.

'Baggage all right, sair,' said the porter. 'Follows *toute suite*. O.K.'

The concierge, as convinced as his fellow-servant of the value of a guest, led Simon up a short flight of stairs and presented him, as a proud hunter might present a trophy, to a reception clerk who lounged in clothes both exquisite and French behind another

curved mahogany counter, much larger than that allotted to the concierge downstairs.

The booking-clerk glanced at Simon with swift appraisal. Being a man of great skill in his business, he realized almost to a penny the value of his new guest. This was no case for the offering of a room with its own *salle de bains*, but neither was it a case in which a hard bargain for *en pension* terms would be driven and the cheapest attic engaged. Simon was a guest who could pay any moderate charge, and would pay because he was obviously too gentle to dispute any item in his bill.

There was a rapid conversation in French between the clerk and an elegant young woman who sat beside him. A huge book was swung round and pushed towards Simon. A pen was put into his hand. He signed his name and, wondering vaguely what the clerk would think of it, put Badakak as the name of the place from which he had come. He need not have wondered. The clerk took no notice whatever of what he wrote.

‘Quatre-vingt-onze,’ he said. ‘Troisième étage.’

Simon, who knew little or no French, a language never heard in Badakak, read 91 on the key and felt thankful that the Arabic figures are used by all nations. It would have taken him a long time to translate *quatre-vingt-onze*, and in the end he might have got it wrong.

A white-aproned attendant appeared suddenly behind him, carrying the two suit-cases, ready to conduct him to number 91 on the third floor. The *ascenseur*, so the attendant explained volubly, had that very morning, for some reason quite obscure, refused

to march. To-morrow, no doubt, it would march again. Meanwhile, if Monsieur would give himself the trouble to climb the stairs. Simon did not understand this long speech, but he followed the attendant up two flights of stairs.

The door of 91 was flung open and Simon was ushered with impressive politeness into a room which was almost dark and intolerably stuffy. The darkness was remedied at once. The attendant in the white apron flung open the jalousies. A chambermaid, appearing unexpectedly, switched on three electric lights. Both the man and the woman bowed low, smiling with pride and satisfaction. A traveller had been carried off from the very door of his train. He and his luggage had been deposited in room 91. There had been no hitch, no difficulty, no resistance. Such an accomplishment creates pride and certainly deserves reward. Simon tipped them both with English money and they left him to consider the comforts of room 91 and, if he liked, admire the view of a yellow courtyard outside his window. The courtyard itself was very far down, and the shaft of which it formed the base reached very far up. It was not an attractive view.

Simon, though timid, was not without some common sense, and some ability in the conduct of the practical affairs of life. If he had been the fool men sometimes took him for, he would never have achieved his remarkable success with the Badakakians. Certainly he would never have persuaded that turbulent people to worship in a Christian cathedral or have taught them to enjoy the noise made by an aeolian harp. A man who has done such things and kept on doing them for twenty years does not sit down helplessly with folded

hands because he has been hustled into a strange hotel in a town he never meant to stay in. Being in Marseilles, with room number 91 in the Hotel Bristol on his hands, Simon made up his mind that there were two things he had to do. First it was necessary to obtain some French money. Next he must get something to eat. It was half-past five o'clock. A man may dine at seven without offence to those who feed him. What was left of the hour and a half after the money-changing was done might be spent—it had to be spent somehow—in looking at picture post cards in shop windows.

Simon, ignoring the sulky lift, walked downstairs and asked the concierge the way to Cook's office. The concierge was devoted to the service of guests in this hotel and deeply convinced of the extreme stupidity of all foreigners, especially Englishmen. Instead of telling Simon to turn to the right, cross the street and pass two turnings to the left, he came out of his box, took Simon by the arm and led him from the hotel, saying 'Par ici, monsieur, par ici,' gently, as he went. Still holding Simon, he walked a few yards up the street and then stopped.

'Voilà, monsieur,' he said, pointing to Cook's office, easily distinguishable by the large gold letters over the door.

After that Simon could hardly have failed to get there even if he had tried to lose himself. Cook's offices, in Marseilles and elsewhere, take great pains not to hide themselves.

The changing of his money took no more than five minutes, for the clerk at the bank counter was a swift worker. Simon found he still had an hour and twenty

minutes left, for seven really is the earliest possible time at which it is possible to dine. Cook's office is an attractive place, and has comfortable seats set out for the use of customers. Simon went round the show-cases which lined the walls and picked out a number of the most highly coloured steamer advertisements. With these in his hand he sat down.

There was a large ship with very squat funnels coloured gold and yellow, and floating on an azure sea. It took people to the Canary Islands. There was another, a more rakish-looking vessel, with sloping black funnels, which went up the Adriatic Sea. There were enormous Leviathans which ferried passengers across the Atlantic from Bremen or Southampton or Cherbourg. There were others—but Cook's offices are full of such pictures of steamers, and any one who enjoys day-dreaming can do so without cost and without a guiding list in his hand. The effect of all this reading and study of beautiful pictures on Simon was complex. There came on him the sense that for the first time in his life he was a free man with no bonds of duty holding him fast to the Badakakians or any other people. He had not much money, but he had some, enough to take him, if he chose, to the Canary Islands, or up the Adriatic Sea, or to Finland or——. But along with the sense of freedom came a return of his old shy dread of other people. He felt that he dare not, could not face another voyage in another English ship among a crowd of other English people.

Last of all, his pile of papers was a small limp advertisement, badly printed on thin green paper. It had only a smudgy black and white picture of a most

inferior steamer, no luxury cruiser, no mighty liner. The letterpress was entirely in French, a hint that English people used the steamers of this line very rarely. Simon, who read French with great difficulty, understanding only a small part of what he read, stuffed the paper into his pocket and went out into the street.

He could not have told why he put this advertisement, and this only, in his pocket, leaving all the others, even the squat-funnelled Canary Islander, on the floor beside his chair. There may have been at the back of his mind a feeling that he, a most inferior person, would feel less out of place, and be less unhappy, in this small shabby steamer. He did not know where it went. He had made no plan of going in it ; so it can scarcely be said that his taking the paper with him was a deliberate act. The Reverend Kenilworth Allworthy, at his desk in the London Office of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation, might have spoken of an overruling providence, if he had known what Simon was doing then and what would happen afterwards. Allworthy was a religious man and believed in providence. A less religious man, knowing the present and the future, which neither he nor Allworthy could have guessed, would have spoken of a blind impelling fate. Whatever explanation is adopted, it cannot be denied that this insignificant action was pregnant with great consequences. It decided Simon's whole future life, and not his only. On it, on the pocketing of that advertisement, the future of Mrs. Halliday depended, and Betty's future, and to some extent that of Elizabeth Code, and, though slightly less, that of the Bishop of Barminster.

Even Duckward Kelmer felt, though faintly, the repercussion of this fateful action, a very wonderful example of the interdependence of men, for a senior official in the Home Office might well be regarded as beyond the reach of destiny.

CHAPTER III

SIMON left Cook's office and walked, staring round him, along the Rue Cannebière. He had read a guide-book which lay about in the reading-room of the *Vishnubrahma*, and therefore knew that the Rue Cannebière is one of the world's most famous streets.

'Here', so the intelligent writer of the guide-book observed, 'are to be met representatives of all nationalities. Here East walks side by side with West, "though never the twain shall meet"', and the blond natives of the colder climes jostle in friendly rivalry the sunburned men of Latin races and fez-clad Moors with even darker skin.'

So he wrote, and having got well started on a pleasant theme, went on writing for nearly a whole page, contrasting olive-eyed Levantine Greeks with lantern-jawed Captains of Industry from Indianapolis, and—Hardly a notable race escaped sending a representative to the Rue Cannebière, and every man among them came decked with some satisfying cliché, some epithet worn to the smoothness of a water-rolled pebble by constant use.

Simon was a man of childlike mind. He expected to see, and therefore did see, all that the writer of the guide-book told him to look for. Long intimacy with the Badakakians, who have neither newspapers nor

books, left him in the happy position of finding fresh and vivid observation in the tritest clichés. A fair-haired man was to him a 'Nordic blond'. A clean-shaven man became at once a cotton king from Tennessee. There were noses which seemed to him to belong to Jews from Alexandria, and shifting eyes which he easily identified as those of Arab silk merchants from Damascus. In fact, the Rue Cannebière came up to the reputation established for it by the guide-book writer, and Simon felt his heart enlarged by this panorama of the glories of the world. Only he shrank away, a little frightened, from two American girls who were conversing, after the manner of their kind, in shrill shrieks as they passed him by.

The evening was hot. The effort required to distinguish intermingling nationalities is considerable. Walking on hard pavements is trying to a man accustomed to the swampy jungle ways of Badakak. Simon grew tired. The Rue Cannebière offers ample relief to people with sore feet and aching eyes. Every ten yards or so on both sides, a café spreads its awning over grouped chairs ranged round little marble-topped tables. The weary passer by can sit down, and provided he orders a modest drink, can stay there, sitting restfully for hours. Simon sat down, glad of the rest, but a little nervous. He had no objection to ordering and paying for a drink. His difficulty was that he did not know what to ask for. He remembered with satisfaction that the French for beer is *Bière*, very like the English word. He had been careful to abstain from Badakakian piwong, but he had no conscientious objection to drinking French beer.

A waiter in a white jacket with a tray dangling from

his hand hurried up to Simon's table and stood expectant.

'Monsieur?' he said, quite civilly but with the air of a man who has no time to waste. Indeed that waiter had no time to waste. He was hurrying from table to table, setting down full glasses, snatching away empty cups, with such speed that he had hardly breath to say '*toute de suite*' when he received an order.

At the sight of him, at the sound of his jerked-out 'Monsieur', Simon completely lost his presence of mind and forgot the French for beer. Nor, at the moment, with the eyes of the waiter on him, could he recall the French for any other liquid. Even café escaped him. He looked round wildly. At the next table sat a Frenchman, a man with a comfortable paunch, a soft beard and a straw hat, plainly the kind of man who knew what to order at half-past six o'clock in a café in the Rue Cannebière. In front of him was a glass half full of a pink liquid which looked slightly sticky. At his hand was a siphon and from it he was squirting soda into his glass. Beside the siphon was a little bowl of ice. The thick liquid, for all Simon knew, might be some deadly form of absinthe, something stronger than piwong.

The waiter said 'Monsieur' again sharply.

Simon made up his mind to order the pink drink, whatever it was, and he thought he could order it without real difficulty. He pointed with a stiffly extended forefinger at the Frenchman beside him. He meant to point, and indeed did point, at the glass which was now foaming. But the waiter, who followed the direction of the finger from a different angle, thought

he was pointing at the man, perhaps at his beard, his paunch or his hat.

'Celà,' said Simon.

He distinctly remembered that *celà* is the French for 'that'. He had been taught the word at school and was sure that he was right.

'Monsieur?' said the waiter again, this time completely puzzled.

'Celà,' said Simon, firmly, clearly and distinctly.

The waiter hurried away, and Simon congratulated himself. He had made his meaning plain, and in a few minutes he would have in front of him a glass of pink syrup, a siphon of soda water and a little bowl of ice. He was mistaken. The waiter came back but brought no liquid with him. He brought instead a plump little man with twinkling eyes and a friendly smile, the proprietor of the café.

'Monsieur le patron,' said the waiter, performing the introduction ceremoniously.

The *patron*, it appeared, spoke English, which at its worst was much better than Simon's French.

'American?' he said, smiling. 'Yes? No? English? You come in P. & O. Yes? Always the good P. & O. Monsieur desires a cocktail?'

'No, thanks,' said Simon; 'beer, I think, or indeed anything.'

The *patron* spoke to the waiter at some length, and, it seemed to Simon, with great ferocity. Simon felt sorry for the poor man who was being rebuked for not fetching what he had never been asked for. The smiling *patron* turned to Simon again.

'The Americans, they like Marseilles,' he said. 'They come here to eat fish. The best fish of the world.'

The waiter, who really moved very rapidly, set down a foaming glass of beer at Simon's elbow. The *patron* talked on.

'Monsieur no doubt desires to eat fish, *bouillabaisse*, the speciality of Marseilles, the *langouste*, the sole. But, Monsieur,'—here his voice took a note of sadness—'it is not everywhere even in Marseilles that one finds the true *bouillabaisse*, or the *langouste*, with the veritable *mayonnaise tartare*. It is necessary to know where to eat. But Monsieur without doubt knows where to go for the *bouillabaisse*, and the sole *Meunier* with *champignons*. Yes? No?'

Simon shook his head. He certainly did not know where to go for *bouillabaisse*. He did not even know what the stuff was or whether he would like it if he got it.

'But I will tell you, I myself,' said the *patron*.

He was a man of quick apprehension and readiness to seize opportunities. Fate had delivered into his hands that most desirable of all preys, an unsophisticated English traveller, a man obviously of feeble character, probably of great wealth, a man with practically no power of resistance. It was a splendid prize and *monsieur le patron* did not mean to waste it. Unfortunately he could not look for any great gain to himself, the price of a glass of beer, two glasses of beer, a liqueur, a cocktail, small possibilities. But *monsieur le patron*, like all Frenchmen, had a strong feeling of family solidarity. He might not be able to make much out of this Englishman himself, but he had a brother who could and would. That brother owned a restaurant—a restaurant at which people dined. Simon, so the *patron* decided, should dine

there and dine well. Yes, well. *Monsieur le patron* was an honest man. He meant to put money into his brother's pocket, but he intended to put a good dinner into Simon's stomach in return.

'When Monsieur has finished his beer, I will take him to the establishment of my brother. Monsieur has heard of him? The famous Remuet. All the world knows the *bouillabaisse* of Remuet. Monsieur does not? Ah! But he will this evening. It is not far, oh, not far at all. There Monsieur shall eat fish in perfection. My brother is an artist. It is not every one who knows his establishment. The Americans? No. The English? No. But we of Marseilles, we know, only we do not always tell the foreigners. He has enough, the foreigner. Dollars! Pounds! Let him spend them in grand hotels. They are for him. The establishment of my brother of Remuet is for us others. But Monsieur is different. I will conduct him to the Maison Remuet.'

This was immensely flattering, and Simon, for the first time since he had been dubbed archdeacon, felt that he was being treated with respectful and affectionate admiration, which is the way all archdeacons ought to be treated. Indeed, so often had he felt snubbed on the *Vishnubrahma*, this seemed the first time in his life that he had been treated with anything but contempt. It was almost as if the promise of the beatitude was being fulfilled unexpectedly, on this side Jordan's wave. He, meek if ever a man was meek, was inheriting the earth, or that part of it which contained the famous Remuet, brother of *monsieur le patron*.

He gulped down his beer. The *patron* dashed

towards the open street, dodging chairs, tables and jingling glasses with astonishing agility. Simon followed, more carefully. Looking back and beckoning, the *patron* plunged into a vortex of moving traffic, skirted the fronts of trams, ignored oncoming taxies, treated with contempt the hoots of lordly limousines. Simon followed nervously. They arrived safely at the other side of a broad street, sped on, as if the perfection of the brother's *bouillabaisse* depended on its being eaten at exactly the right minute and might be missed by a moment's delay. They turned down a side street, turned sharply to the right into a still narrower street, passed from it into an alley. There, outside a small eating-house, the *patron* stopped.

'Behold,' he said, with fine gesticulation. 'Behold the establishment of my brother Remuet, who makes perfectly the *bouillabaisse*.'

Simon, a little doubtful whether he would ever find his way back again, beheld the establishment. He was led inside. An eager waiter came forward, but *monsieur le patron* would have nothing to do with him. Another waiter, no doubt of a superior kind, stepped out from behind a screen. He was waved aside. No one but the brother himself, the famous Remuet, so it appeared, was to serve so distinguished a client. Simon felt an unaccustomed glow of pride. He had never before been treated in this way. The Badakakians are a humble people, not given to self-assertion, but their manners were not to be compared with those of the *patron*.

The brother, drawn with shrill cries from some inner room, came forward bowing. Simon was introduced to him. There were more bows. Simon was

conducted by the brother himself to a small table. The *patron*, the original *patron* from the café, took on the task of ordering the dinner. He was interrupted now and then with sharp cries of eager assent from his brother. The first waiter approached with a napkin set in a large wineglass and an enormously long roll of crusty bread. The second, the superior waiter, came forward with a wine list and handed it to Simon with a bow. The *patron* snatched it away at once.

‘Ah,’ he said, ‘the good Alphonse. He brings the wine list. It is necessary to choose the wine.’

He had ordered the dinner in French and Simon had not understood one word he said. The choosing of the wine was apparently a different matter. He did that in English.

‘Monsieur,’ he explained to his cousin, ‘is not an American. The Americans, *pouf!* What do they know of wine? But the English—that is a different affair. The English drink wine, but not too sweet. You understand,’ he turned to Alphonse the waiter and explained the English taste in French, translating afterwards for Simon’s benefit. ‘The English do not love sweet wine. They are right, without doubt. Now here——’

He laid his finger on the name of a white wine the name of which Simon had never heard. ‘Here is what is right to drink with a *bouillabaisse*, with a *langouste*, with *sole Meunier*. Afterwards! Afterwards is another affair. With the coffee a fine champagne.’

Alphonse went away to get the white wine. M. Remuet, the famous Remuet, greatly pleased at the way things were going, gave staccato orders to the

other waiter. The friendly and helpful *patron* of the café bowed himself away, uttering prayers for Simon's appetite and Simon's digestion. The *bouillabaisse* arrived by the hands of the inferior waiter, who was addressed as Jacques. Alphonse brought the wine, carrying the bottle wrapped in a napkin with all due reverence.

The *patron* of the café, the elder Remuet, had not lied about his brother's skill. The man was an excellent cook. Simon ate the first really good dinner he had ever eaten in his life. He appreciated it all the more because for twenty years he had known no greater dainty than roasted carcillo, a kind of hedgehog peculiar to the Badakakian swamps and greatly appreciated by the natives. Travellers eat it but not with real zest, for the flesh, so fine and white, has an earthy flavour.

He enjoyed another even more remarkable experience. For the first time in his life he drank a bottle of good wine.

CHAPTER IV

IT is recorded of the Patriarch Isaac that he was unable to bless his son properly until he had made a good meal of his favourite food. The narrative makes it clear that the effect of the savoury meat was not merely the creation of a general mood of benevolence, a state of mind in which a man might bless any one. That is a commonplace effect of a good meal and results among the less spiritual people of modern times in the giving of a heavy tip to the ministering waiter, a tip at least twice as big as it would have been if given in advance before the meal. This is really a form of material benediction. It follows good eating and drinking just as surely as the more spiritual kinds. It is here that Continental waiters have made a mistake. By forming themselves into a union and stabilizing tips at ten per cent. of the bill, they have helped to degrade the whole art of good dining with its resultant mood of benevolence. English waiters are wiser.

But the story of the patriarch shows us that the savoury meat does something more than bring on a mood of benevolence, a desire to bless. It actually bestows upon the eater the power of effective benediction. Without the venison or the substituted kid's flesh, Isaac might have uttered expressions of goodwill but they would not afterwards have worked out

as he wished. Having eaten, the benediction became an effective cause of future happiness.

Such are the astounding effects of food or the want of it, feasting or fasting, on the spiritual part of man.

Simon Craven had dined well, dined better than he had ever dined in his life before. He had been waited on with friendly assiduity, treated as an honoured guest. The general effect was to give him a new sense of self-respect. He could, after that dinner, have faced on equal terms an Anglo-Indian of the pukka sahib kind, or a lean and energetic Memsahib, or a horsey subaltern, or even, most difficult of all, a sportive maiden.

There were, of course, no such people there. They had all gone homewards by the Continental train. Even if one or two had lingered in Marseilles they would not have dined at the restaurant of the brother of the *patron* of the café in the Rue Cannebière. It was not the sort of place which appears in the pages of guide-books, and it would not be easy for strangers to find. Simon was alone with his new self-respect. It burned in him like a shilling in the pocket of a small boy who cannot be happy till he spends it. Simon, unconsciously seeking adventures, some outlet for the spirit in him, drew from his pocket the steamer advertisement which he had picked up in Cook's office.

He laid it on the table before him and began to translate, slowly and with difficulty. It was the advertisement of a French line of steamers which voyaged with extreme irregularity to a number of different ports with a general tendency to get to Corsica in the end. Some went to one part of Corsica, some to another. One, evidently the chief ship of

the company, went all round the island. Simon was trying to disentangle the route of a small ship called *La Jeunesse*, when Jacques, the inferior waiter, approached him with a cup, a long coffee-pot and a bowl of sugar. Alphonse followed with a wineglass and a bottle of cognac. The proprietor, M. Remuet, followed Alphonse, bringing his personality, many smiles and bows. He could bring nothing else, except a bill, and it was not time for that. He did not speak a word of English, and had realized early in the evening that Simon spoke no French. Jacques was in no better case. But Alphonse, the head-waiter, like many of his kind, spoke bad English fluently. M. Remuet hoped, in French, that Monsieur had dined well. Alphonse translated. Simon said that he had dined very well indeed. Alphonse translated this, and Simon, with a special effort, said 'Tres bien'. M. Remuet smiled. Everybody, including Simon, smiled in reply.

Alphonse glanced over Simon's shoulder at the steam-boat advertisement.

'Monsieur perhaps visits Corsica?'

Simon had not thought of doing such a thing, but now that it was suggested to him, there seemed no reason why he should not. Corsica, contemplated after a good dinner, seemed likely to be a pleasant place. Alphonse told Remuet and Jacques that Monsieur intended to visit Corsica. Remuet said that the island was truly magnificent. Jacques said that it was rapidly becoming *mondaine*. Simon would certainly have shrunk, even after dinner, from anything like a fashionable watering-place. Jacques' '*mondaine*' might have turned his thoughts from

Corsica if he had understood the meaning of the word. Fortunately he did not, and though Alphonse faithfully translated *Vraiment magnifique*, his English failed him when it came to *mondaine*.

'In Calvi', said Alphonse, 'is my sister, chief *femme de chambres* in the hotel in which Monsieur will undoubtedly stay. It is a good hotel.'

Leaning forward, he pointed with his thumb to the itinerary of the smallest and least esteemed steamer on the list. After visiting Toulon *La Jeunesse* went to Calvi, and thence—it was an errant steamer—to Leghorn and back again to Corsica, this time to Basti. Taking it as settled that Simon would go to Calvi and go by *La Jeunesse*, Alphonse told Remuet and Jacques the news. They both approved highly of the choice. M. Remuet, a man of some historical knowledge, said that Napoleon was born in Calvi and that Nelson lost his eye there. Alphonse translated.

'And is there anywhere else in the world', he added, 'where two so great men meet together?'

It surprised Simon greatly to hear that Nelson and Napoleon had actually met either in Calvi or anywhere else. It surprised him still more to gather, as he did from what Alphonse said, that Napoleon had himself put out Nelson's eye. But after dinner a man takes a lenient view of the statements of historians, giving them credit for truthfulness which they do not always deserve.

Jacques announced that his nephew was a steward on the steamer *Jeunesse*.

Remuet, not to be outdone, said that his sister's husband had at one time been hall-porter in the Palace Hotel, Calvi, the hotel in which it was quite

settled that Simon should stay. He was no longer there because he had by great good fortune obtained a similar but more desirable post in Cannes.

Alphonse translated all this, and Simon felt that he was being unescapably shepherded to this place Calvi, of which he had never heard before. Since he had left the *Vishnubrahma* he had had little control over his own movements. The tout-porter of the Hotel Bristol had shepherded him into the hotel. The hall-porter had handed him over to the reception-clerk. The reception-clerk had settled him in room number 91. The *patron* of the café had led him, a captive trembling amid the traffic, to Remuet's excellent restaurant. Alphonse, the head-waiter, meant to ship him to Corsica in the steamer *Jeunesse*. Once on board he would be taken in charge by the steward, the cousin of the friendly waiter Jacques. The steamer would deposit him in Calvi, where he would be met by the concierge of the Palace Hotel, to whom, by way of introduction, he would mention the name of M. Remuet's brother-in-law, once at Calvi, now in Cannes. In the hotel he would be taken over, with the utmost kindness, by Alphonse's sister, the head-housemaid. From the hotel he would go out day after day to see the place where Napoleon put out Nelson's eye, and there meditate on the pleasantries of fate which had brought two such men together on such a spot, which had deposited him there in the course of the long journey from Badakak to London.

No doubt—Simon's thoughts flowed quietly on—there would be somewhere in Calvi a museum, and in it the rapier, bayonet or battle-axe with which Napoleon had put out Nelson's eye. Such a relic would certainly

be preserved, or if not preserved, created and exhibited by the guardians of the museum. Simon was a man of some imagination. This is clear, for if he had been stupidly bound down to the commonplace he would never have thought of attracting the Badakakians to a cathedral by means of an aeolian harp.

The three friendly attendants, M. Remuet, Alphonse and Jacques, chattered together, planning every detail of Simon's tour. Like the *patron* of the café in the Rue Cannebière they felt that Providence had been kind to them in sending them this singularly helpless Englishman. It would be gross ingratitude to the powers which give such gifts not to use him for the advantage of their friends and relatives. There were Jacques' cousin, the steward, Alphonse's sister, the housemaid, and the successor of Remuet's brother-in-law.

It was Remuet, less directly interested than the other two, who suddenly saw a difficulty, so great a difficulty that it might wreck the whole expedition. He explained it at great length to Alphonse, speaking so fast and so explosively that Simon feared the two men had quarrelled. Alphonse threw up his hands in despair. It was indeed an awful difficulty. Passengers must embark on *La Jeunesse* at 11 a.m. and did not reach Toulon till 5 p.m. The company made no arrangements for feeding them. How and when was Monsieur to eat? Monsieur must eat, and eat well. But how? What to do?

It was Jacques who solved the difficulty. His nephew the steward, whose name was Pierre, would no doubt for so eminent an Englishman produce a *déjeuner*. The menu was discussed at length. An

omelette, that went without saying. Jacques called the good God to witness that his nephew Pierre could make an omelette. He could also produce fish, lemon sole, fried. Then veal, yes, but certainly some veal with potatoes *sautées*. And cheese. And a peach. As for wine? M. Remuet favoured a white wine, Bordeaux supérieure. Alphonse was firmly of opinion that the wine should be red, a wine of Corsica. There was a red wine of Corsica which could be drunk with sole and veal. Jacques was of opinion that his cousin Pierre would certainly possess a bottle of this wine.

Simon sat listening, sure that his affairs were being discussed, perhaps his whole future planned out for years ahead. This was on the whole a pleasant thought. It is delightfully restful to be planned for by friendly people, especially to a man who has spent twenty years of his life making plans for others, as Simon had for the Badakakians.

At last Alphonse translated.

'As for the luncheon of Monsieur,' he said, 'all goes well. Jacques'—he pointed to the inferior waiter who smiled assent—'to-night Jacques visits his cousin and all arranges itself.'

There seemed little doubt that all would. Indeed, there was nothing left for Simon to do except buy a ticket and find out where the steamer was. It was very easy to go to Calvi, the easiest thing in the world when every detail was planned out for him by these strangers. Indeed, he began to feel that it would be exceedingly difficult not to go to Calvi. He would have to give some reason to Alphonse for refusing to be ministered to by his sister, the head-housemaid. He would have to explain, so that the explanation could

be translated to the proprietor, why he did not want to see the rapier with which Napoleon prodded Nelson's eye. And what reason could he give for such indifference to the great events of history? He would have to make excuses, to be passed on to the cousin of Jacques, for not turning up next day to eat the luncheon prepared for him. All this seemed difficult and complicated. It would be far easier to go to Calvi.

Simon paid his bill, tipping liberally in spite of the ten per cent. for service, and then confessed that he was very doubtful about finding his way back to the Hotel Bristol. Everybody at once offered to guide him. It was M. Remuet who did so in the end, and he had not been tipped. He acted out of pure benevolence. The French, so it seemed to Simon, are a delightful people, as kindly as the Badakakians themselves, indeed kindlier, for in these days they do not take a pleasure in cutting off each other's heads. Certainly they were far friendlier than the Anglo-Indians on the *Vishnubrahma*.

It was not until after he was in bed in number 91 in the Hotel Bristol that Simon began to wonder whether he had money enough for the expedition to Calvi and for a stay there. In money matters he was little better than a child and had never in his life given any serious thought to finance. In the jungles of Badakak neither pounds nor dollars are very much use. A man obtains food by other means than buying it. Such help and service as he required were given freely and gladly by his converts and almost as willingly by those not yet Christian whom Simon visited in outlying unconverted tracts of his archdeaconry. The

climate made clothes almost unnecessary, and Simon understood very early in his mission that it did not do to alienate the sympathies of those among whom he lived by going about better dressed than they were. He gradually lost almost all the books he possessed and had no particular wish to acquire more. In the end, when the tornado struck the cathedral, he had of his own just three volumes, an English Bible, a Greek Testament, and a Prayer Book with which were bound up Hymns Ancient and Modern.

Meanwhile the committee of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation, a faithful and perfectly honest body of men, went on paying a salary, admittedly small, into a bank in one of the coast towns to the credit of the Rev. Simon Craven. Simon very seldom visited the town, seldom wrote a cheque, and never made any inquiry about the condition of his account. Indeed, he was hardly conscious that he had an account until the time came when the doctors ordered him back to England. When that happened the need of money to pay for the journey drove him to the bank. He found that he was the possessor of what seemed to his simple soul almost incredible riches. A salary paid regularly and left untouched and a few dividends collected by a bank accumulate to the most amazing extent if the account is hardly drawn upon.

The bank manager was kindly and helpful, as indeed most people were who came into close contact with Simon. Most of the money was transferred by some incomprehensible process to a bank in England. A very considerable sum was handed to Simon, and the banker, who liked Simon, added interest to the credit

balance. The whole sum was handed over to Simon in the form of travellers' cheques.

'These', said the bank manager, 'you can cash anywhere in the world except in the Badakakian swamps, so you had better not go back there, Mr. Craven.'

Simon promised the bank manager, as he had already promised the doctors, not to go back. He put the bundle of cheques into a leather pocket-book without counting them and never examined them until he became uneasy about money in the Hotel Bristol. The bank manager might if he liked have robbed him of considerable sums, but nobody in the world ever robbed Simon. Even a Badakakia head-hunter would not do such a thing.

In the Hotel Bristol before he went to sleep he counted his cheques. He had only the vaguest idea of what a stay in Calvi was likely to cost; but the sum in his pocket-book seemed so vast that it was scarcely possible to spend the whole of it even if he spent a month or more in Calvi.

With a mind completely at rest and a body well satisfied, Simon switched out the light, turned on his side and went to sleep.

He was immediately bitten by a mosquito which summoned two friends and with their help continued to bite him all night. They intended to make him miserable, as they had made many others, and hoped to see from their lairs next morning his swollen hands and half-closed eyes. It is gratifying to record that these malicious insects were bitterly disappointed. Simon was unharmed. Neither hands nor face were swollen and he showed no desire to tear the skin off

his ankles. A man who has been accustomed for twenty years to the mosquitoes of the Badakakian swamps can treat their cousins in Marseilles with complete contempt. The mosquitoes did not know this, so their disappointment in the morning was acute, which was very good for them. Creatures who live to cause suffering to others ought sometimes to be made to suffer themselves.

CHAPTER V

THERE is no doubt about the value of what is politely called 'influence' but more commonly known as 'pull'. A man can of course obtain almost any desirable thing by paying for it. A private suite of rooms on an Atlantic liner can be secured in this way. The thing has a fixed price, publicly advertised, and any one in a position to write a cheque which a bank will honour can have the suite of rooms. But paying for a thing is not the only way of getting it. It is quite possible to secure the suite on the liner, or a number of other equally desirable things, without paying more than the sum called 'minimum', which ought to buy no more than a berth in a windowless, airless cubby-hole with two other people in it. What makes this possible is influence or pull.

A prominent politician, really prominent, the kind whose speeches are broadcast, does not even have to ask. The steamship company or other controller of desirable things offers the best there is without waiting to be asked. A great actor, of cinema or theatre, is in the same happy position. A merchant who exports things and can offer cargoes may have to ask for what he wants but he always gets it. So does a tourist agent who can exercise a certain directing power over passenger traffic. Next in the scale of those who get

special treatment and privilege are the people who, though not themselves politicians, actors or merchants, are connected with such people by marriage, ties of friendship or mere acquaintanceship. Their approach to the fount of authority is indirect but quite effective. They get, if not royal or bridal suites, at all events accommodation of a superior kind without paying for it.

A mere archdeaconship scarcely counts in the great world, and Simon Craven had no influence of his own. Nor was he even remotely connected with any one who had. Residence in Badakak does not offer many opportunities for making the acquaintance of the eminent. But by great good fortune, and thanks originally to the *patron* of the Rue Cannebière café, he secured influence at least as valuable as that of one of the directors of the steamboat and hotel companies. Directors loom large and are really very important, but they are not nearly so important as the servants of the company, the men and women who make the arrangements and see that they work.

It was with this important class that Simon, through no merit of his own and without any effort, got into touch. Jacques did actually pay a visit to his cousin the steward. Alphonse, by the hand of Pierre the steward, sent a note to his sister the head-housemaid. M. Remuet wrote a similar letter to the hall-porter, commending Simon to him, claiming special care on the ground that his sister's husband, now in Cannes, had once been in the position of the present hall-porter.

Such is influence, or pull, and the way it is used. In Simon's case it was most effective. When he boarded *La Jeunesse* he was received with warm wel-

come by Pierre who assured him that his luncheon would be of the best and gave him a fair-sized cabin with no one else in it. There was no real difficulty about this, for the first-class part of the steamer was nearly empty. But Pierre took full credit for what he had done and left Simon with the agreeable feeling that he was an honoured guest.

The course of *La Jeunesse* lay along the same stretch of coast which the P. & O. steamer had passed the day before. Once more the weather was brilliantly fine and the sun shone, but Simon was in a very different mood. On the *Vishnubrahma* he had been a lonely man who felt himself an outcast and despised. On *La Jeunesse* he was the most important first-class passenger. Pierre got him a deck-chair and set it—its leg-rest temptingly outstretched—in a nook under the shelter of a deckhouse. A polite ship's officer, with courtly bows and a splutter of staccato French, offered him a pair of glasses and returned from time to time to point out headlands, bays and villages, giving a name to each. Well-informed passengers on the *Vishnubrahma* had done the same thing, but Simon had been too shy to join the groups round him. Here he had a cicerone all to himself, and one who was certain to be right about the names he gave. This rightness about names is no real advantage, because one name does just as well as another for a place you do not mean to visit. Yet there is a certain satisfaction in feeling that things are as they should be.

In due time Pierre summoned him to a luncheon set with care and a certain elegance on a small table in the saloon. It was an excellent luncheon, but as Pierre said (in French, of course) it is also necessary

to dine. Simon smiled, though he did not understand what was said to him. Pierre went on to explain that the steamer would spend four hours in Toulon, starting again at nine o'clock. Simon's best plan was to go ashore and dine at a restaurant which Pierre was prepared to recommend. Again Simon smiled. He did not understand a word, but Pierre was evidently trying to be helpful.

Pierre realized after a time that it was no use talking French to Simon ; but he was anxious if he could to make clear what he wanted to say about dinner, both for Simon's sake and with a view to the advantage of the restaurant which was kept by a friend of his.

He began by saying the word '*diner*' several times over very distinctly, illustrating his meaning by putting a spoon and fork into his mouth. Simon realized after a time that '*diner*' meant dinner. He supposed that Pierre intended to provide him with that meal. This pleased him, for the omelette he had eaten was excellent, and the fish just set before him looked good. The rosy red Corsican wine also pleased him. He nodded and smiled.

Pierre, a very resourceful man, then went to the clock which hung in the cabin and pointed to the hour of five. This seemed to indicate the hour at which dinner would be ready. Simon smiled again. Pierre then pointed to nine, and this time the conversation broke down. Simon supposed that he was meant to go on dining from five till nine, and that seemed too long to spend over a meal. In four hours, at the rate he was getting through his luncheon, he might expect to eat through twenty or thirty courses. That was too much. He was not prepared to attack such a

feast even to please Pierre, though he felt warmly to the man on account of his kindness.

He said 'Non' distinctly and, after a short pause, 'Merci' by way of politeness.

This seemed to excite Pierre, who said, 'Mais oui, mais oui.'

Simon understood this, but remained firm in his objection to a four-hours' dinner. Following the excellent lead he had been given he got out his watch, laid it on the table and pointed first to seven and then to a quarter to eight. That, he meant to suggest, was long enough for any dinner.

Pierre got more excited than ever and went on pointing to nine both on the clock and on Simon's watch. Then he said 'Toulon' several times. Simon recognized the name, but did not see why he should spend four hours over dinner because the steamer he was in called at Toulon.

He said 'Non' again, and Pierre said 'Oui' hundreds of times

By that time Simon had finished his fish. Pierre went away and came back with the veal. He recognized that he was not getting on well with his arrangements for Simon's dinner. He went away again and came back bringing the stewardess with him.

The stewardess of *La Jeunesse* had a reputation among her colleagues as a linguist. It was believed that she could speak English. She kept up this belief because it put her in the way of getting extra tips whenever English people travelled on the ship. In fact, she only knew two English sentences and one isolated word. She had learned them as so many Frenchmen learned the English they knew during the

war. In 1915, being then a young girl, she was staying with an aunt in Boulogne and there came in contact with men of the British Expeditionary Force. There was a young sergeant in the Dublin Fusiliers who met her every morning when she went out to do the marketing for her aunt. It was he who had taught her English.

Pierre brought her into the saloon and stood her beside Simon's chair. He explained the situation to her. It was necessary that Monsieur should go ashore at Toulon for dinner, and desirable that he should take the meal in the restaurant kept by Pierre's friend. Would Madame—the stewardess was a married woman—explain this to Monsieur, Madame who knew English so well? Madame saw at once that one of her two English sentences was almost exactly what was wanted.

'Come for a walk,' she said, and then added 'Toulon.'

Simon could scarcely misunderstand this. She was inviting him to walk round Toulon with her. It was a thing which he did not particularly want to do, but it seemed rude to refuse. He looked doubtfully at the stewardess. Pierre, delighted at the progress things were making, said 'Oui, oui, oui, parfaitement !' and pointed once more to five and then nine on the clock, running his fingers four times round the dial to indicate the passing of the hours. This made Simon more doubtful than ever. He did not want to spend four hours in dining, but he would prefer that to four hours parading the streets of Toulon with a woman whom he had never seen before. She looked a thoroughly respectable woman. Indeed, no thought of anything else crossed Simon's mind.

One of the advantages of spending twenty years

among the Badakakians is that the man who does so retains, or regains, the unsuspecting innocence of early boyhood. The Badakakians, though given to cutting off each other's heads, are in other respects a very moral people. No woman ever makes improper advances to a man. Such a thing would be inconceivable. If it occurred the woman's head would be immediately cut off, and her skull, with the skin stretched over it, would be made into a drum. Simon, accustomed to this austere morality, suspected no impropriety in the stewardess's proposal. What troubled him was the simple fact that he did not want to take her for a walk in Toulon. He did not want to take Pierre either.

He shook his head decisively.

The stewardess, falling back on her isolated English word, said 'Please.'

This puzzled Simon more than ever. He could not imagine why this woman should want to go for a walk with him, want to so much that she gave him a really pressing invitation, for that was what her 'please' amounted to.

The stewardess felt that she was not getting on as well as she hoped, but she had still one English phrase in reserve, learnt, both words and meaning, from the attractive sergeant in the Dublin Fusiliers. She looked at Simon and saw that he was not in the least the same kind of man as the sergeant. She glanced at herself in the mirror under the clock and realized that the war was a long time ago. She was no longer the young girl she had been in 1915. Still, an English phrase is an English phrase, and there was no sense in wasting what she knew.

'Give me a kiss,' she said slowly and distinctly, and once more added 'Please.'

This startled Simon. Being a man of childlike nature with very little knowledge of evil—except the head-hunting of the Badakakians—he did not, as many another man might, take the stewardess's invitation at its face value. At the same time he did not want to kiss her or be kissed by her. He said 'Non' three times over.

Pierre, who did not understand his colleague's English, said 'Mais oui, mais oui.'

This stiffened Simon's determination, and he said 'Non' again. The stewardess, though she knew the meaning of her own English, had no more wish to be kissed by Simon than he had to kiss her. She was indeed a married woman of extreme respectability, the respectability of a middle-class provincial French-woman, which is more respectable than any other respectability in the world. The very memory of the flirtation with the Irish sergeant had faded from her mind, leaving only the two sentences which marked the beginning and the end of the little adventure, and even these were cherished, not for the sake of their meaning, but frankly for their commercial value. Her reputation for knowing English did bring her extra tips. She silenced Pierre's insistent 'Oui, oui,' and began a long discussion with him. Being a kind-hearted woman, and having taken a liking to Simon, who seemed to be in need of help and protection, she wanted to hit on some plan by which a dinner could be secured for him.

In the end she and Pierre did hit upon a plan together.

The steamer reached Toulon, nosing its way past battleships, then through a narrow passage between pierheads into the innermost basin of the port. There after some fussing she tied up to the quay. On the quay, waiting to welcome her, were the stewardess's husband and her small son, a boy aged eight. To them she explained the unfortunate position of the English passenger who was sitting alone on his chair on the upper deck.

She and Pierre fetched Simon down to the gangway. He scarcely made an effort to resist, for he felt that they were both acting for his good. At the gangway she handed him over to her son. The child, who understood what was expected of him, led Simon off to the restaurant chosen for him by the steward. He told the waiter that the Englishman was to be fed, such being the orders of Madame, his mother. Simon dined.

After dinner the child appeared again and led him back to the steamer where he was welcomed with smiles and congratulations by Pierre and the stewardess.

CHAPTER VI

THE arrival of *La Jeunesse* in the little port of Calvi is something of an event. It happens only once a week, which gives the entertainment it affords a flavour of rarity. It brings from the mainland many things which the people in that part of Corsica cannot produce for themselves, not only tobacco, coffee and such things which are not produced anywhere on the island but of which a reasonably large store can be kept. The steamer also brings such perishable things as butter, unobtainable in the singularly arid region round Calvi. The steamer is thus welcomed with a certain eagerness among the people who throng down the steep and narrow streets of the citadel and gather in crowds in the scarcely less narrow streets of the commercial quarter.

There are also passengers to be met, tourists in summer who are grabbed by hotel touts and herded into chars-à-bancs, friends and relatives all the year round, for there is a steady stream of travellers between Calvi and Toulon. These for the most part travel third class, are crowded together on shelterless lower decks fore and aft and are horribly seasick all night however calm the sea may be.

The hour at which the steamer arrives is inconveniently early, 6 a.m., but that makes no difference to the people of Calvi. They have, so far as the casual visitor

can discern, nothing to do all day except sleep, so it is not felt as a hardship that they have to be up early one day in the week to meet the steamer.

Simon stood almost alone on the upper deck reserved for first-class passengers. He had been there since before five o'clock, watching in wondering admiration the drifting of the morning mist across the mountains as the steamer approached the coast. Like fine grey veils drawn back by hesitating hands the moving wreaths revealed, then shrouded, then revealed again, rugged peaks, deep purple gorges, shining precipices and crags like the battlements of castles planned with fantastic spirit by fairy architects. Still, as the sun grew stronger and the mist dispersed there rose into view higher and more distant peaks. Still, the gloom of the deep gorges grew more intense in contrast to the brightening slopes of grey stone beside them. The whole scene was incredibly beautiful and had the strange fascination of high romance.

Simon, sensitive to beauty and capable of romantic dreaming, stood motionless, gazing like a man caught by a spell, from whose consciousness the realities of common life have disappeared.

But the realities had not disappeared. They never do. Into the dream comes the voice of the commonplace, always, however, little welcome. This time it was the voice of the steward, the waiter, Jacques' pleasant cousin, Pierre.

'Calvi,' he said, pointing with his finger to the crowded quay, the grey huddled lower houses, and the towering citadel.

Simon, though unwilling, looked round, turning his eyes from the mountains. The steamer swept round

in a sharp curve, passed a white buoy and opened to view a long stretch of white sand, Calvi's glory, about which the people have made little songs which they teach their children to sing to a plaintive tune, 'Calvi Plage'.

The curve of the strand ends with the town and the crowded quay where already the people were beginning to shout greetings to the approaching steamer.

'Hotel,' said Pierre.

He knew by this time that it was useless to talk French to Simon, but he guessed that hotel is the same in all languages, as indeed it is if Magyar is left out of the count. The Hungarians, a most individualistic and independent people, have a word of their own for hotel.

Even if Simon had failed to recognize the word he would have understood what Pierre was saying. The man pointed with his finger to a long white building just outside the town, a building with rows of windows blinded with jalousies, with a long shaded balcony on the first floor, with its name in large gold letters blazing across the front, a building which could not possibly be mistaken for anything but an hotel.

Pierre did more for Simon than simply indicate his lodging-place. He singled out from the crowd on the quay a man in a pale buff linen suit and a yachting cap with a lettered band on it. He signalled to this man, who responded eagerly, pushed his way through the crowd to the very edge of the quay and leaped on board of the steamer before the mooring ropes were made fast, long before the gangway was run out.

Simon said good-bye to the friendly Pierre and followed this man who had seized his bags. By pushing

and shouting a path was opened through the throng. Simon was helped into a large open motor. Once more he was shepherded as he had been ever since he left the *Vishnubrahma* by kindly and efficient guardians. The sense of peace and well-being grew in him.

It may be that Pierre managed somehow to convey the message of Alphonse, head-waiter in Marseilles restaurant, to his sister the chambermaid, and that she had rapidly spread the news of Simon's arrival among the hotel staff. It may have been simply that guests are rare in a tourist hotel in the early part of June. For one reason or the other, perhaps for both, Simon received an impressive welcome. It seemed to him that there were rows of men, all bowing, all smiling, all bent on pretending that they were receiving a royal personage from one of the few countries left in the world which still indulge in the luxury of kings.

The reception-clerk, a fair-haired youth from Switzerland, greeted Simon in doubtful English, sentences compiled not without effort. He was allotted a room. He was led to it with ceremony. He was visited in it by Alphonse's sister the chambermaid, who turned on a bath for him, set electric lights glowing where they were not in the least wanted, and chattered volubly. She brought him coffee, large flat rusks and sourish butter. Rolls, universal elsewhere in France, are unobtainable in Calvi. The butter was sour because it was the last remnant of the previous week's supply. The kegs and cases brought that morning by *La Jeunesse* had not yet been opened. It was not a very appetizing meal, but Simon ate it gladly. Much worse food would have tasted good served by that smiling chambermaid and the rusks, far inferior to French

croissants, were better than the flat maize cakes which the Badakakians bake.

He washed, ate, drank, re-clad himself and then with an exciting sense of adventurousness went down to the hotel hall.

The Swiss reception-clerk came to him at once. This excellent young man, who was learning the details of the business in which his countrymen excel, felt that he had a duty to Simon. He had no idea of leaving a guest uncared for and unguided, especially at the beginning of the season when guests were comparatively rare. He suggested that Simon might like to hire a motor-car and drive to a village, whose name Simon could not catch, among the mountains. Through a long window, flung wide open, its jalousies swept back, he pointed to the village. It nestled in one of the gorges which Simon had seen, violet dark, from the steamer's deck. But now the sun had reached it and its white church spire gleamed bright above the clustered roofs of the houses. It seemed to Simon that it would be a pleasant thing to visit that village.

Or perhaps—the Swiss clerk was quick with his suggestions—Monsieur would prefer a tranquil morning after his journey. Would he like to visit the citadel and see the house in which Napoleon was born. There was a plaque on the wall which recorded the fact. The house was not difficult to find.

Simon, who felt that some response was due to all this civility, said something about Nelson's eye. Was there another plaque to indicate the place where that was lost?

Either the young Swiss had never heard of Nelson's eye, or else he was one of those who could speak a

language well enough in prepared sentences but cannot understand the same language when conversation gets off its appointed and beaten track. He gaped at the mention of Nelson's eye and changed the subject.

Perhaps Monsieur would prefer a sea-bath. Calvi was famous for its sea-baths, taken from the sandy beach. If Monsieur desired a sea-bath . . .

The suggestion was supported and the attractiveness of sea-bathing at Calvi illustrated by a happy chance. While the clerk was speaking two ladies came downstairs and crossed the hall. The younger of the two was little more than a child, a girl of about fifteen years of age, slim and evidently active. The elder, the mother, was a woman who might have been forty but intended to look younger if she could. In this she was successful. She wore a brightly coloured silk coat, one of the garments which London drapers have agreed to call 'happi-coats', in the hope of making them popular in a world saddened by income tax and other oppressions. The garment hung loosely from her shoulders displaying beneath it the curves of a good figure, covered, in parts, by a sky-blue swimming dress. The dress, the curves it covered, the shapely limbs it made no attempt to hide were all to be seen by any one interested enough to look at them, for the black and scarlet coat concealed nothing, being no more than symbolic concession to the ideas of decency which prevail in English watering-places but have long ceased to exist in any other part of the world. The girl, who was very young, had not yet acquired a sense of what foolish people call modesty. Her bathing dress was as scanty as her mother's, but she did not possess or did not choose to wear a happi-coat.

An English archdeacon, fresh from a Diocesan Conference, might have been shocked by such a display of naked limbs, though even archdeacons, the last men in the world to countenance anything indecent, would in all likelihood have been pleased and cheered. Certainly no feeling of disapproval troubled the Archdeacon of Badakak. For twenty years he had lived in a country where women wore far less than this lady and her daughter. In Badakak a wreath of leaves is clothing enough and the sight of a leg affects the beholder no more than an ungloved hand does in England. Simon had got far past that stage of civilization in which nakedness is confused with indecency.

The only effect on his mind of the appearance of the two ladies was to make him wish to bathe. He looked through the open window and saw shining in the sun the long curve of golden sands. Behind it, black in contrast, by contrast emphasizing the gold, was a belt of pine-trees. In front was the expanse of the bay, water strangely blue, glittering where the sun struck ripples, glowing where there was a perfect calm. The day was becoming warmed. Soon even to Simon's tropic trained body there would be heat. He turned to the reception-clerk and said that he would certainly bathe.

The clerk was all helpfulness. He presented Simon with a ticket which entitled him to the use of a striped tent. Madame and Mademoiselle had another tent, but there were four on the beach. Monsieur might have any of the other three at his own choice.

Half an hour later Simon was on the beach, leaving a towel and a pair of shoes in the farthest tent from that of Madame and Mademoiselle. Under the influence of kindness he was growing in self-esteem and getting

over his shyness, but he still preferred to avoid the risk of being snubbed by strangers. Madame and Mademoiselle were not likely to be as friendly as the stewards and waiters he had met during the last two days. Besides, they might be French, in which case the language would be another bar to intercourse.

CHAPTER VII

SIMON was a good and fearless swimmer.

A missionary in Badakak can get on very well without being able to play cricket or tennis, at all events in the earlier part of his work, before his converts are sufficiently advanced on the road to civilization to require instruction in these games. It was no use to him to be a good rider, for there is no animal in Badakak which could possibly be ridden. Bridge is a totally useless accomplishment. But he must be able to swim.

There are parts of Badakak where the natives are amphibious. Indeed, there are rumours among the traders in the coast towns that these people have webbed hands and feet like a duck's. This, though it has been printed in books by several adventurous travellers, is not true. It would be an advantage to the people if it were, but Nature, in spite of our philosophers, does not always adapt man perfectly to his environment. These people, living as much in the water as out of it are extraordinarily skilful in dodging the crocodiles which abound in the sluggish rivers of the district. These reptiles have increased so rapidly that they have reached the point, dreaded by Malthus, when they are pressing against the limits of sustenance. They have little enough to eat and are, consequently, always on the look out for careless or unskilful Badakakians.

They succeed occasionally in snatching a young child who has not yet learned to take care of himself, but the adult Badakakian, whether male or female, knows exactly how to defeat the attacks of the craftiest crocodile. He is such a good swimmer and diver that even when cornered he can often get the better of the reptile in a straight fight.

A missionary who hopes to make any real impression on his people must necessarily be a good swimmer. If he is not the Badakakians would despise him as a man inferior to themselves, which would weaken his influence. Also, sooner or later, he would be eaten by a crocodile, which would destroy his usefulness altogether. His blood would not even serve as the seed of an infant church, for the Badakakians would pay no honour to a man who lost his life through his own inefficiency. In their eyes he would not be a martyr, merely a weakling. They would regard him as the more civilized English regard the politician who fails to be elected through an inability to tell the necessary lies. No one has any respect for a man of that sort.

Simon never equalled his converts in swimming. That, as the Badakakians recognized fairly, was scarcely to be expected of a man whose skin was white. He never, for instance, felt sure that he would be able in an emergency to bestride an active crocodile and thrust his thumbs into its eyes. This is a recognized way of dealing with these reptiles when it is impossible to escape them. But Simon was a good enough swimmer and sufficiently wary to avoid extreme danger, and the Badakakians respected him for his skill.

A man who does anything well generally enjoys doing it. Simon was conscious of a keen feeling of

delight when he stepped from his tent and crossed the patch of sand which led to the sea. Calvi strand slopes very gradually, and it is necessary to wade out a long way before reaching deep water. This is an advantage to the timid bather and no great hardship even to a swimmer. The water is blue and transparent. It is also, in summer-time, fairly warm. Wading out does not mean, as it does in England, getting chilled inch by inch upwards. The sand underfoot is fine and is perfectly smooth save for wrinkles like those which reminded Coleridge of the Ancient Mariner's face.

As he waded out Simon looked around at the curve of the sunlit bay. Here and there were figures of bathers, half-submerged or swimming. Bathing dresses, emerald green, scarlet or brilliant yellow, gave the scene a gaiety which comes of colour splashes. Here and there the bathing cap of a swimmer bobbed up and down on the surface. On the shore young men ran races and three girls practised the art of standing on their hands, head downwards, toes in air.

When he was waist-deep Simon flung himself forward and struck out. With the easy, gliding motion of a seal or a great fish he sped swiftly from the shore. In a few minutes he was beyond the reach of the voices of the young men and maidens who shouted in their play. He passed beyond the bobbing caps of the most daring swimmers. Beyond him was the sparkling surface of the bay, miles of blue water. Beyond that was a range of mountains, all their fantastic peaks sunlit and sunbaked. He turned on his back and lay looking shorewards. The figures on the strand seemed very small, marionettes dancing in simple gaiety. The long front of the Palace Hotel glared white, its

windows shielded by their jalousies like eyes closed tight against the intolerable blazing of the sun. The low town sun-baked, with streaks of heavy shadow where its streets ran, huddled round the harbour, as if it were seeking shadow from the citadel above. The citadel stood sun-defying. Its smooth sides half rock, half masonry. With a sense of rapture at the pure beauty of it all Simon turned again and swam on, on, until at last, about a mile from the shore he turned on his back and lay passive, gently rocked by the swaying water, sun-saturate, gazing far into the infinite blue of the sky, as the soul eyes of a mystic gaze into eternity. Alone. Blessedly and utterly alone.

So he thought, but wrongly. The peace was broken, the sense of solitude destroyed by a rude shock. Something hit him, something from under water bumped him hard between the shoulder blades. The delicate equilibrium of a passive floating body was upset. Simon rolled over, his face and all his head submerged. The suddenness of it caught him unprepared. Fine swimmer as he was he spluttered breathlessly when his head emerged again.

His first thought was that a porpoise, playing its game of leaps and rolls had struck him with its blunt nose. He had seen these creatures sporting round the *Vishnubrahma* as she approached Marseilles. In their rising, before they turned over, they would give a floating man just such a bump as he had felt. Memories of Badakak and its crocodiles came into his mind, unpleasant memories. Just so these reptiles came suddenly on any one careless and unwary enough to lie floating in the rivers. But they came with a

rending of flesh and a crack of snapped jaws, not with a harmless blunt-nosed bump. Simon quickly reassured himself. Porpoises, so far as he had ever heard, are friendly creatures with no desire to eat a man or bite off his leg. He might have reassured himself still further. The creature which bumped him was not even so wild as a porpoise. From behind him came a clear voice.

'So frightfully sorry. Really and truly I apologize.'

Simon turned. He had a glimpse of a yellow bathing cap, of waving white arms, of broken foaming water. The speaker was swimming to him with rapid strokes, swimming in one of those new manners so carefully taught by professionals in baths, where high speed is attained by exact co-ordination of the movements of arms and legs.

The splashing stopped. Beside him, so close to him that he could have touched it with his hand, was the face of a girl, a young girl, of the girl he had seen with her mother in the hotel.

'You must have thought me frightfully rude,' she said, 'and I suppose you'll never forgive me. But I couldn't resist it when I saw you there lying quite flat.'

Simon smiled in reply. Even if he had been angry it would have been impossible to resist the appeal of the merry face, all gleaming wet, and the laughing eyes. There are men of dignity, heavy with the sense of their own importance who would resent being suddenly bumped by a strange child, who would regard such playfulness as impudence or worse. But Simon was no such man. For years he had thought so little of himself that it was almost impossible for him to feel insulted. And he had not been hurt. The bump on

the back, delivered from under water, on a floating body, was no severe thing. There was nothing to resent, nothing to forgive.

But Simon was puzzled. The girl had, so she said, been unable to resist it. To resist what? It seemed impossible to suppose that the chance of bumping his back with her head could have offered a serious temptation to any girl.

'But what were you trying to do?' he said.

'Sure you're not cross with me?'

'Quite. There's nothing to be cross about.'

'Lots of people would be,' said the girl. 'Some people would be simply mad. Did it hurt?'

Her cheerful frankness reminded Simon that she was no more than a child. She might be, as he guessed when he saw her in the hotel, fifteen or sixteen, but in mind and heart she was a child.

'It didn't hurt in the least,' said Simon, 'but I do wish you'd tell me why you did it.'

'I'm practising surface diving,' she said, 'beastly hard thing to learn. Harder than the crawl stroke. Did you see my crawl stroke? I haven't got it right, I know, but I'm improving.'

'You do it beautifully,' said Simon, remembering the way she swam up to him.

'But I'm not nearly so good at surface diving. In fact, I'm an utter rotter at that and simply must practise. Petty said I must if I'm ever to get my certificate. Do you know Petty?'

'No,' said Simon.

'That's a pity. She's our games mistress. Her name is Pettigrew, so naturally we never call her anything but Petty, though not to her face, though she

wouldn't mind really if we did, except for discipline and the tone of the school and all that. I wish you could see her swimming. She really can.'

'But I still don't see why you bumped my back with your head. It was your head, wasn't it? I hope it didn't hurt you.'

'Serve me jolly well right if it had. I oughtn't to have miscalculated the distance, but I did. That's my great fault and I can't get over it. I always come up too soon, or else go on miles too far, till I'm nearly bursting, and then when I come up I find I needn't have. Such waste! and most frightfully annoying.'

'Were you trying to swim under me?'

'That's it exactly,' she said. 'I saw you lying there quite flat and I thought how splendid it would be if I dived and swam under you and came out the other side, without your knowing a thing about it. But I went and miscalculated and came up right under you instead of yards away. I don't believe you'd have known a thing about it if I hadn't made that mistake. I believe you were asleep. Were you?'

'Not quite,' said Simon.

'Well, anyhow, I'm frightfully sorry. Not that it's much use saying that when it's done. But I'll tell you what. I'll lie flat and let you dive under me just to make up for what I did, and if you hit me I won't say a word.'

She swam away two yards or so, turned on her back and lay still.

'Now,' she shouted.

It was a handsome offer, for she did not know whether Simon could dive or not. He might, if he had been a

beginner in the art, have not only bumped her with his head. He might, in his plunging, have kicked her hard with both feet.

Simon hesitated. He did not particularly want to dive under the floating child. He did rather want to go on talking to her, or listening to her talk. She turned her head and spoke to him.

'Can't you surface dive?' she said. 'You ought to learn, you know. Petty says it's frightfully useful in life-saving, and anyhow you can't get your certificate without it. Have a try.'

Then there came on Simon suddenly a desire which he had not felt for many years, the desire to show off. As children we are all tempted in this way and frankly yield to the temptation, calling friends and relatives to witness and applaud our skill. As grown men the temptation still assails us and we still yield to it, though no longer with innocent abandon. We deceive ourselves, making believe that we are not showing off and do not value the applause we get. A vain pretence, for even if we succeed in deceiving ourselves we totally fail to deceive any one else. The applause we get is not a sign that our friends admire us, only evidence that they are goodhearted people who wish to give us pleasure if they can.

It is this instinct for showing off far more than any desire of gain which makes our actors act, our cricketers play county cricket, the members of our women's institutes send their embroidered tablecloths to distant exhibitions. It is this which makes vocalists sing and pianists bang the keys of their instrument. It is this which induces politicians to make speeches and generals to organize reviews, marches past and

field-days for their troops. It is indeed one of the strongest of human emotions, driving men and women to actions when, except for this desire, they would rather stay quiet and rest.

For many years Simon, unlike the rest of us, had not felt this desire at all. Even when he was made an archdeacon he did not long to put on an apron and gaiters at the earliest possible moment. It is true that such garment would have been extremely uncomfortable in the swamps of Badakak. Indeed, no man, however anxious to display his grandeur, would have worn them there. The Badakakians, a simple-minded people, would have thought that their beloved pastor had gone suddenly mad if they had seen him in the full costume of his office. Simon might, if he liked, have given himself a short leave of absence and spent a week or two in one of the coast towns. Even there a long, black coat and the rest of the uniform would have occasioned surprise, though it would also have secured admiration and respect. Most of us, in Simon's position, would have found a joy in displaying ourselves, in full ceremonial dress, in the office of the British Consul, the private room of the bank manager, and of course in the club.

It never even occurred to Simon to do such a thing. He did indeed appreciate the honour his bishop had done him and he felt the responsibility which rests on ecclesiastical dignitaries. He wrote to a firm of clerical outfitters in London ordering a suit of archdeacon's clothes, sending careful measurements. The garments arrived after a time, but he never once put them on. During the whole voyage in the *Vishnubrahma* they lay untouched in their original paper at the bottom of one

of his suit-cases. So great was his dislike of display and showing off.

This kind of vanity was indeed one of the sins from which he had tried to wean the Badakakians. In their natural state, that is to say before conversion, they took the greatest delight in displaying their collections of human skulls, and Simon, who felt strongly in the matter, had to teach them that such flaunting is unchristian. He would never have succeeded, as in the end he did, if he had been guilty of a similar sin himself.

To any dweller among the Badakakian rivers diving is not merely an elegant accomplishment, it is part of the equipment necessary for living at all. A crocodile, for instance, can overtake the swiftest human swimmer if the race is at all a long one. But a crocodile, is a very stupid creature, and when its prey disappears from sight by suddenly diving the crocodile is puzzled. Though an excellent diver itself it does not think of looking under water for what it has seen on the surface. A jaguar, though it dislikes the water, will sometimes bound in in the hope of seizing a man, but a jaguar cannot dive and a swimmer who submerges in time is perfectly safe. It will easily be understood that Simon who had survived twenty years in Badakak was a good diver.

He swam quite close to the girl, turned over and then without a splash or a struggle, as smoothly as a blob of oil falls on water, went under the surface. The water was quite clear and his body was plainly visible, a strangely elongated fishlike shape, shooting down towards the distant bottom. He went straight down, so far as the girl could see almost without movement or effort. He turned, rose a little, circled swiftly. As

he circled he rose farther, slanting upwards till his body was no more than a foot or two below the surface. At the completion of a wide circle his head emerged as silently as it had gone under, close beside the girl, at almost the exact spot at which the dive began.

'Crikey!' she said, 'and Great Scot! and my hat! I say you *can* dive! I wish old Petty had seen that. It would have taken the conceit out of her, and she fancies her own diving quite a bit.'

The child's admiration was sincere and outspoken. While she praised him Simon realized what he had done. He had been guilty of an offence against good manners. This boastful self-display, what was it but the grossest form of vulgarity? And it was something worse. It was a sin against the Christian virtue of humility, against that charity which vaunteth not itself. So Simon felt, being a foolish man and very simple of heart. Because of what he had done the sun shone less brightly for him. The sea was not so blue. The joy of life was dulled. He swam sadly away. The child he left behind wondered, knowing in a puzzled way that something had gone wrong, though she could not guess what it was.

She too turned and swam shorewards. In the shallower warmer water her mother waited for her, paddling gently with her hands to keep herself afloat.

Betty told the story of the man she had met and of his wonderful diving. Mrs. Halliday was interested and pleased. Part of her satisfaction she expressed at once.

'Perhaps now', she said, 'you'll stop talking about that games mistress of yours. I'm getting pretty tired of her.'

So she was. For Betty almost worshipped Miss Pettigrew, and what a girl worships she likes to praise.

'Poor old Petty,' said Betty. 'She can't dive, not really.'

The other part of her satisfaction Mrs. Halliday kept to herself. She had recognized Simon when he came from the beach as the man, plainly an Englishman, whom she had passed in the hall of the hotel. She was not one of those women for whom a man is a necessity, who is miserable without one, but she found life more agreeable if there was a man somewhere near her to whom she could speak. She had not formed a very high opinion of Simon at the first glance. Still, he was a man, and any man is better than none.

CHAPTER VIII

POST offices, cable companies and other bodies, catering for the public which wishes to send messages, have a good deal to learn from people to whom they are not at all likely to turn for instruction. Our official and established message carriers do their work with fair efficiency and sometimes at high speed ; but they always charge a good deal for their services. All they do can be done and is done every day even more efficiently and swiftly at no cost at all by savages, by tramps, hotel servants and others.

The Badakakians, for instance, can carry news for hundreds of miles with the utmost speed and at no expense. Simon always found a settlement of his converts prepared for his visit even when he took the greatest trouble to make it a surprise. Householders in England have a similar experience. Moved by an unusually well-told tale of distress a man gives a shilling to a beggar. His house may be remote from any town. It may be away from all high roads. Such a position makes no difference. Within a week he will receive visits from twenty or thirty other beggars. They will have heard the news that he is the kind of man who gives away shillings. That message, with name and address and everything else necessary, even a hint of the kind of story to tell, has somehow been passed on to every beggar within a

range of twenty-five miles or so. Can any post office in the world do that? And would any post office do it if it could without charging a penny?

It is no doubt by some similar means that hotel servants communicate with each other about the disposition of guests in the matter of tipping. A man may leave an hotel in Paris without announcing his destination and travel without a pause for two days by the swiftest trains, but when he enters an hotel in Bucharest his reputation is there. Whether he is treated with distinguished courtesy, ordinary civility or actual rudeness depends on the amount of tips he gave in Paris.

The means by which this sort of news is conveyed remains quite obscure. There are suggestions of Ali Baba methods, chalk marks on garden gates, cabalistic signs on luggage labels and so forth, but none of these explanations are satisfactory because none of them accounts for all the observed facts. This story has therefore a value for the scientific sociologist, because it describes exactly how Simon Craven's reputation as an Englishman of unusually foolish generosity was established in the southern parts of France. It began with the happy effort of the *patron* of the café in Marseilles to serve the interests of his brother the restaurant keeper. It spread, growing as it went, to the head-waiter in the Calvi Palace Hotel, and it has been made quite clear how this happened.

That it happened there is no doubt at all. When Simon, still shyly and a little timidly, entered the long saloon of the hotel ten minutes after the dinner gong sounded, he was met by an obsequious head-waiter who led him straightway to the best table in

the whole room, a table which stood just inside a long window, so that the fortunate diner, while filling his stomach with food and drink, could feast his soul on the vision of the darkening bay and watch the shadows creeping up the mountains beyond until even the highest peaks lost the sun.

It is true that Eugene's action—Eugene was the waiter's name—was not so generous as it seemed. There were only two other parties of diners in the room and there were five tables set in windows. Simon might just as well have had one as not, but Eugene, by the extreme obsequiousness of his manner, managed to convey to Simon that he was being treated with special distinction. And apparently he was. Neither of the other two parties had a window-table.

It is also true that Eugene, like every one else in his line of business outside England, had compounded his chance of tips for a fixed payment of ten per cent. added to the traveller's bill. He had no right to expect any more. But he did expect more and generally got it from guests who were treated as he treated Simon.

Simon was far too simple of heart to suspect a mercenary motive for the civility. He felt that he was being treated with great kindness and the feeling set his heart aglow with affection for his fellow creatures. He thanked Eugene and thanked a female satellite of Eugene's who helped to settle him down. His French was equal to an ill-pronounced 'Merci' and even supplied a 'Beaucoup' afterwards.

Handed a wine list, Simon discovered, after some search, the rosy-coloured Corsican wine that he had drunk on the steamer. It was a cheap wine and his

order for a bottle was a disappointment to Eugene who had somehow acquired a right to a special percentage of wine orders. He hoped that an Englishman with a reputation for prodigality would have ordered champagne or at worst a highly priced Burgundy. Though disappointed he remained perfectly civil, fetching ice in a bowl without being asked for it, and suggesting Avion as a table water.

Simon glanced round at his fellow-guests. In a corner near the door sat a middle-aged Frenchman with a plump wife. At the far end of the room were two English ladies whom Simon recognized at once as the mother and daughter he had seen in the morning. He turned his head away, fearful of being unintentionally guilty of a smile of recognition. He did not think it likely that they would wish to make the acquaintance of a casual stranger. He was afraid that they might be prejudiced against him by his ill-mannered swagger in the morning when he showed off his diving to the girl.

After that one glance, Simon turned his head no more during dinner. He gazed with growing delight and wonder at the changing colours of the mountains beyond the bay and the shadows mounting their steep sides.

His delight was interrupted by Eugene. Dinner had reached the stage of *Glaces aux Pistaches* and Eugene was hopeful of an order for coffee and liqueur, for coffee certainly, almost certainly for liqueur. An Englishman with a reputation like Simon's would hardly fail to drink liqueur after dinner.

Eugene, who had a good working knowledge of English, began tactfully.

'Monsieur will no doubt visit the Casino to-night, Boule? Baccarat?'

There is no casino in Calvi, which has not yet reached the stage of development at which such establishments appear. Therefore it is not possible to lose money, either at boules or baccarat in the evening after dinner. Eugene in his own way was a humorist, and delighted in making mild jokes. We all make these mild jokes and all of them are of a pattern. An English city clerk, for instance, returns to his little home in a suburban street. He feels sure that he will get an evening meal, cold tongue, lettuce and tinned apricots. But it pleases him to say to his wife, 'I hope the champagne is on ice, and what about the caviare?'

His wife, when he says that, knows that he is in a merry mood, and, if sufficiently quick-witted, responds with a quip of her own.

Simon, unfortunately, did not realize that Eugene was making a joke, nor did he know exactly what a casino is. Boules and baccarat were entirely strange words to him. No doubt, so he thought, a casino is something which a visitor to Calvi ought to see.

'Yes,' he said, 'I should like to. Where is it?'

The reply completely upset Eugene. His English was good, but it was not good enough to enable him to explain that his remark was a joke, just where the humour of the joke lay and just why the hearer should laugh heartily instead of answering with heavy seriousness. There is indeed nothing more difficult than to explain a joke in a foreign language. Even those fortunate people who are bilingual can scarcely do this. During the war there appeared in an English

paper a joke about two soldiers. They were seated in a French restaurant, and one of them was eating ham which had begun to decay. 'Ere,' he said to the waiter, 'this 'am is 'igh. Comprenez? 'Igh 'am.' 'Just you leave it to me,' said his companion when the waiter seemed confused. 'I knows the lingo. Garcon, je suis.' The paper with this joke in it found its way to Boulogne and into a house where two English officers were lodging with an elderly French couple. Madame, attracted by the picture and the three French words, asked to have the joke explained to her. One of the officers, who knew French very well tried to explain it. He went on trying through a whole meal, through two meals next day, through every meal every day for more than a week, and in the end failed to make Madame see the point.

This shows how hard it is to explain a joke to a foreigner and makes it clear why Eugene was embarrassed when Simon said he would like to visit the Casino.

In the end, after a long explanation, Simon got up and left the dining-room, determined to find a casino for himself since Eugene was apparently incapable of telling him where it was. He left without ordering either coffee or liqueur, another disappointment for Eugene, who began to feel sorry that he had established Simon in a window-table. He ought to have been sorry that he attempted to make a joke. Without the lure of a casino Simon would have stayed where he was, would probably have ordered coffee, and might easily have been led on to try a Corsican liqueur, green and highly flavoured, which Eugene pressed on the guests whenever he could.

Simon glanced round the dining-room once more before he left. It was empty. The French couple had disappeared, perhaps to the casino. The English lady and her daughter had also slipped away, probably to bed. After swimming miles in sea-water a girl ought to want to go to bed, or, if she does not, her mother ought to send her there.

Simon stepped out on the broad sandy road in front of the hotel. He turned to the left towards the town. He found the narrow streets empty and almost dark. Here and there from the door of some shop which was still open, came a gleam of light, but the windows were all dark and the high houses obscured the pale summer glow in the sky. Simon wandered on, turned to the right again, stumbled down a steep narrow lane, and came suddenly to the quay.

Here was light enough and noise enough, and life. A row of cafés faced the harbour, every one lit with lamps hung from the awnings or trellis work spread above their groups of tables. From the inner depths of each the sanded parlours where immense numbers of bottles stood on shelves, came the braying of mechanical organs and the clamour of gramophones fitted with loud speakers. On the sandy floors dancers pranced, sailors from the ships, fishermen in bright blue sleeveless shirts, labourers with arms and chests burnt almost black by the sun, but always men dancing with men according to the strict ritual of Corsica, which forbids men and women to dance together unless they are married, in which case they no longer wish to dance with each other, or perhaps with anybody else.

Outside the dancing salons where the bottles were stood tables and chairs. Men, women and children

sat there drinking coffee, drinking beer, drinking bright coloured syrups, smoking, talking. They sat for a while, then rose and moved on to the next café for more drinks, or to join the stream of walkers who paraded between the café and the quay side. Here was the night life of Calvi, gay enough and bright enough to stir a jaded spirit, innocent enough to teach our English Pharisees that men and women do not rush headlong into vice even when unrestrained by regulations.

Girls strolled along, up and down, and up and down in bright pyjamas, the hair of their uncovered heads brushed and curled into shining waviness. Elder women walked soberly in the unrelieved black dresses beloved by French peasant women, dresses which reached down to their heels and were puffed out, the one sign of coquetry about them, so that they stood stiffly out from the hips down. Young men in white or yellow trousers, bright-coloured sleeveless shirts and small round hats, puffed cigarettes as they walked. Older men held in their hands the curved bowls of pipes with long stems and amber mouthpieces.

Beyond the walkers were piles of timbers on the edge of the quay, waiting to be loaded on the schooners which lay alongside. On these piles children played, just outside the range of the lamps but visible as silhouettes in the surrounding glow. They were fairy figures, incredibly light of foot, running, leaping, dancing when some tune of the gramophones reached them. Not for one instant did their twinkling movements cease. It was like the noiseless dancing of shrunken leaves on the ground on a breezy day when the sun is bright overhead.

The masts of the dark ships, moored stern on to the quay, stood out against the faint glow of the summer sky. The black water lay mysterious beyond them, moving between them against their sides, lapping on the smooth stones of the grey wall, the hungry kisses of the sea to the beloved land towards which it strives. Beyond the masts, beyond the pathless water, far out of reach of lights or sound or human movement was the still mass of the mountains across the bay. Gone now were the shapes of the villages and ridges which had grown into vision in the early morning, stood sharply outlined in the midday sunlight, changed colour as the afternoon hours passed until pervading purple blotted out all their colours. Even the purple was gone now, and the shapes gone with it, leaving the mass of the mountains high, black, menacing.

Simon sat down on a chair, one of the vacant chairs in front of the largest of the cafés. The scene fascinated him. His eyes feasted on the moving figures, the tall masts, the black water, the immense wall of the towering mountains. His eyes rose slowly to their very tops where the shape of their pinnacle crags was just visible, outlined against the paler sky. It seemed as he watched that the shape of the mountain-tops grew clearer. There was light behind them, other than the pervading light of the June night sky. It grew stronger. It spread from a central point to right and left. It stretched, a broad band of tawny red along the mountain tops. It grew stronger still. The tawny colour brightened into a ruby red. The rim of a rising moon appeared, red as the pervading glow. On the water came a shining silver path, broken, reunited, growing wider, brighter, till it stretched

right across the bay. The moon rose, a great red ball. The red passed into a silver white, mounting high in the heat-dimmed air. The masts of the ships stood clear. The lights of the café dimmed. A vast celestial silence made the noise of human music sound no more than tinkling. The moving figures, girls, women, men, playing children, received a glory which the lights of earth had failed to give them. It was as if they, all these careless, cheery creatures, earth-bound by every thought and wish and appetite, had suddenly without their own volition claimed their right to an eternal destiny.

CHAPTER IX

I THINK that perhaps you ought to order something. These people won't be pleased unless you do.'

Simon turned abruptly from his contemplation of the moon, the mountain-tops, the path of light across the bay and the destiny of the human race. The voice—it was close to his ear—was a pleasant one, the voice of a lady, and the tone was friendly.

'We are expected to order something', she went on, 'if we sit down.'

The speaker, seated at the table behind him, was the lady of the hotel whom he had seen in the morning as she went to bathe, whom he had seen at dinner, before whose daughter he had displayed his diving. The girl was with her, not sent to bed as Simon thought she might be. On the table in front of them were two coffee cups and a liqueur glass. The lady had evidently done what she said was expected and had given an order.

Simon became aware that there stood at his elbow an untidy young woman with a duster in her hand and a leather bag, like that carried by omnibus conductors, hung around her waist by a strap. Simon recognized her as a waitress. But there was little of the trim neatness of a Lyons' girl about her, still less of the lithe grace of the Badakakian maidens who had served him

in jungle huts. This girl looked tired, wore a stained skirt which she had not troubled to brush or clean. Across her left cheek ran a long red scar. On her bare forearm was another scar. At some time in her life, it seemed, she had been in conflict with a man who owned a knife. Her eyes, furtive and greedy, were fixed on Simon. He felt a sudden return of his old bewildered shyness. This frowsy, scarred girl had mastered him, depriving him by her very look of power of speech or action.

He understood clearly enough that the Englishwoman behind him had given him good advice. He ought to have given an order to the girl and he had no objection to spending a few francs. He would gladly have handed over the francs, but he felt that would be impossible. He turned to the lady behind him and his eyes made the pathetic appeal of a helpless creature. The lady felt sorry for him. She responded to the appeal at once and came to his help.

'Pour monsieur,' she said. 'Café et un fin. Pour moi encore une Benedictine.'

The girl with the scar turned away well satisfied.

'Thank you so much,' said Simon. 'It was stupid of me not to have thought of ordering something. Of course I meant to, but I was looking at the moon.'

'I don't wonder,' said the lady. 'They keep a remarkably good moon in these parts, quite worth looking at. But tell me, did you ever see anything like that girl's pyjamas?'

The damsel she indicated was most gorgeously attired. She had achieved a daring combination of very brilliant colours. Her long wide trousers just tipped the insteps of her sandalled feet. Her loose

coat swung gracefully as she strolled past. The lady turned to her daughter.

'If I thought you'd ever walk as well as she does,' she said, 'I'd get a suit like that for you. This', she turned to Simon, 'is Betty, my daughter. She's supposed to be ill, though she isn't in the least and in my opinion never was. That's why we're here. Betty, go back to the hotel and go to bed at once. Girls who get off school because they're supposed to be ill mustn't sit about all night drinking coffee and asking for jazz pyjamas.'

Betty was an amiable and obedient child. She got up at once but, perhaps to save her self-respect, disclaimed all wish for the pyjamas.

'I wouldn't wear things like that', she said, 'even if you did buy them.'

Then she offered her hand to Simon and said 'Good night'.

The girl with the scarred arm came back bringing coffee and liqueur. Simon looked at his cognac doubtfully.

'I'm not very good at French', he said, 'and I didn't quite catch what you ordered for me. What is it?'

'Liqueur brandy,' said the lady. 'It's not particularly good brandy. I prefer Benedictine myself, but most men don't like sweet liqueurs.'

Simon looked at the little glass. He had avoided the Badakakian piwong for twenty years and was not at all sure that it was wise to break his rule, even though the spirit was civilized and French. He hesitated, reflected that the quantity was very small and raised the glass to his lips.

The lady sipped her Benedictine daintily, and then

made a remark so startling that Simon swallowed the whole contents of his glass at a single gulp.

'Betty', she said, 'has fallen in love with you, hopelessly and completely.'

'Oh no,' said Simon, choking feebly.

The contradiction was all he could think of. The situation seemed to him very embarrassing, and he did not in the least know how he ought to behave.

'On account of your diving,' she said. 'It was so kind of you to dive for her. I did so want to thank you, but I hardly liked to walk all the way across that great empty dining-room in the hotel. Eugene might have misunderstood. I don't trust that fellow Eugene at all. I am sure he has a nasty sordid mind. Keep a sharp eye on the details of your bill when you pay it. I'm keeping a note of everything I order.'

This was better, and a relief to Simon. If it was only his diving which had attracted Betty it was a simple matter to dive no more. Then her passion for him, if based on nothing else, would die away. There he checked his thoughts, conscious that they were leading him into a mood of ridiculous self-conceit. No girl of fifteen could possibly have fallen in love with him whether he dived or not. He saw himself plainly enough, a lean, sallow wreck of a man, without manners, without wit, save in diving, without grace, no hero for any young girl's fancy. The mother must have used the word 'love' in some new sense with which he was not familiar. Many English words had changed their meaning during the twenty years he had spent abroad. So he had learned on the *Vishnubrahma* on the way home.

'The last person she was in love with', said Betty's

mother, 'was the games mistress at her school. I'm so glad you've cut her out. These extremely muscular young women set such a bad example to girls, and Betty is bad enough in that way already. It was really quite a relief to me when the doctor said she's inclined to be lungy. Not that I believe it, of course.'

If it relieved the mother to be given a hint of possible tuberculosis, it relieved Simon to know that Betty's passion was for muscle, whether in woman or man. Though he could dive he had no exceptional physique and felt certain that the games mistress would outshine him in any other form of athletics. When Betty found out that he could not play tennis, or hockey, or hang by his heels from a trapeze, she would return to her affection for the games mistress. In the meanwhile 'love', as he understood the word, was not a correct description of her feelings.

'Perhaps', said the mother, 'I'd better introduce myself. My name is Halliday.'

'Mine is Craven, Simon Craven.'

He paused uncertain. Should he add 'Archdeacon of Badakak'? On the one hand, such an announcement of high ecclesiastical dignity might be boastful, and of any form of swagger he had a strong dislike. On the other hand, his archdeaconry might be a protection from further entanglement with Betty. An archdeacon cannot reasonably be expected to start a flirtation with a girl of fifteen. While he hesitated the girl in the splendid pyjamas passed again, making her slow parade across and across the fronts of the cafés. Mrs. Halliday leaned forward and watched her eagerly.

'That girl walks well,' she said, 'but lots of them do. She shows off those pyjamas. Do you notice the hang of the jacket from the shoulders and the way the broad stripe in the stuff has been managed?'

The girl passed, leaving Simon more doubtful than ever about announcing his archdeaconhood. Would Mrs. Halliday discuss pyjamas with him quite so freely if she knew that he was an archdeacon? Ought he to tell her lest, discovering the fact afterwards, she might feel embarrassed?

While he hesitated Mrs. Halliday began to talk again. She seemed entirely satisfied with the mere Simon Craven. People do not really know each other any better when they have pronounced their surnames. There are cases, of course, in which the name suggests something. Mrs. Halliday might have said: 'I used to know a Miss Craven who ran a girls' school in Huddersfield.' Or: 'I met a George Craven last summer who is cotton-planting in the Sudan.' Then, even if Simon denied all knowledge of either the schoolmistress or the cotton planter, the acquaintance would have made a kind of negative advance. She would at least have known that Simon was no relation to any Craven she had ever met. Apart from such suggestions the interchange of names does not really advance things at all. Yet we all feel as if it did. Once we have learned that the man who sits next us in a dining-car is called Robinson we feel comfortably satisfied that he is not an utter stranger and are ready, if we are trustful people, to take him for a friend.

'Now do you think', said Mrs. Halliday, 'that pyjamas like those would catch on in London?'

The girl with the striking suit had stopped her parade and was standing quite still in front of the café where Simon sat. It seemed as if she had somehow divined Mrs. Halliday's interest in her clothes and was inclined rather to encourage than to resent it.

'It's not', said Mrs. Halliday, 'simply a question of colours. It's the cut. You see that, don't you? I can't get it in London. Simply can't. I somehow think they'd sell, but it's very difficult to be sure. They ought to.'

It was perhaps the effect of the glass of cognac, swallowed at a gulp. It may perhaps have been due to Mrs. Halliday's tone of intimate friendliness. Simon did a thing he had never done before in his life. He took a good look at the handsome girl clad in silk pyjamas. Then, slightly ashamed of himself, he turned his eyes away from her and looked at Mrs. Halliday. She had moved herself and her liqueur glass and now stood opposite him at his table. She laughed as she intercepted his glance and caught his eyes.

'Oh, I know I couldn't wear them,' she said. 'You're quite right there. My figure.'

Simon blushed. It was quite true that Mrs. Halliday's figure was not suitable for displaying to the best advantage the exquisite cut of French-made pyjamas. A woman with a daughter of fifteen cannot be expected to have the slim grace of a girl of twenty-one. And Mrs. Halliday, even for a woman of her age, was rather more than comfortably plump. But Simon had not been thinking of her figure. He had not noticed her plumpness. He looked at her merely because he did not feel that he ought to go on staring at a girl in

pyjamas. Mrs. Halliday's interpretation of his glance was as embarrassing as it was mistaken.

'The worst of Englishwomen', said Mrs. Halliday, 'is that they're so self-conscious if you put them into anything they're not accustomed to. That's what makes it so difficult to dress them well. I doubt if I have a single customer on my books who could walk the length of this quay in those pyjamas without thinking about her own legs all the time.'

'But why?' said Simon vaguely.

In Badakak no one ever thought about legs except as things used for walking, and Simon had got into the same way of regarding them. The legs of the Badakakian women were legs in exactly the same way that the legs of the Badakakian men were, or the legs of the Badakakian pigs. The country abounded in pigs, both wild and tame. And a man is really interested in the pigs' legs. He expects to eat them and looks on them with thoughts of roast pork in his mind; thoughts which women's legs do not suggest, for the Badakakians, though head-hunters, are not cannibals.

'Perhaps I ought to tell you that I am a dress-maker,' said Mrs. Halliday.

This was no answer to Simon's 'Why?' but it did explain how Mrs. Halliday came to know how Englishwomen feel about strange clothes.

'I'm really Jane Green,' she said. 'If you know anything about London you must have heard of Jane Green. I don't suppose there's another woman in England who would dare to charge what I do for an evening frock.'

This burst of confidence seemed to demand something in return from Simon, but he still felt that a bald

announcement of his archdeaconry might come as a shock to Mrs. Halliday. She might feel that she had been entrapped into a discussion of her customers' modesty which she would not have begun if she knew that she was talking to a Church dignitary. It might be better—Simon contemplated this plan—to break the thing to her gradually, to begin with the confession that he was a clergyman, go on to say that he was a missionary, and then bring in the archdeaconry when she was getting accustomed to an ecclesiastical atmosphere.

But, as had happened before, Mrs. Halliday left him no time to speak.

'What about strolling up to the citadel', she said, 'and looking in on the prince?'

The proposal was startling enough. Simon was indeed on intimate terms with a good many princes. In writing reports of his work to the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation at home, he had used 'prince' as a convenient, perhaps the only possible translation of the Badakakian word Winak, the title given to tribal chiefs. In the eyes of the English missionary public these potentates were princes, and of course Simon knew them all well. But a European prince was certainly a different thing, and Simon was not sure that he wanted to be presented to one by Mrs. Halliday.

This time she guessed his feelings rightly.

'The sweet old dear', she said, 'is only a Russian prince, and as poor as a mouse. He keeps a kind of—well, I suppose you might call it a night-club—in his flat in the citadel. It's all he has to live on and he's a perfect darling, if only—— But that'll be all right

to-night. I washed his shirt for him the day before yesterday. He stayed in bed till I had finished ironing it. He had to, for it's the only shirt he has. It must have been a long time since anybody else washed it. But, as I say, it's done, so you needn't be afraid of coming.'

'Perhaps', Simon blurted this out desperately, 'I ought to tell you at once that I'm an archdeacon.'

He was not thinking of himself. That was a thing he very seldom did. He was not even considering the effect on the prestige of the Church of England which might follow the visit of an archdeacon to a night-club in Corsica kept by a Russian prince who had only one shirt and did not wash it. He was thinking simply of the awkwardness which would afflict Mrs. Halliday when she discovered, as she must in the end, that she had taken an archdeacon to such a place, not knowing that he was an archdeacon. It is one of the finest traditions of English society that the clergy must be shielded from contact with the world and its ways. A man feels uncomfortable if he says 'damn' in the presence of the rector of his parish. What would a woman feel who took an archdeacon into—'a haunt of vice' would perhaps be too strong an expression, but at least into a dubious resort?

Mrs. Halliday received the announcement without any sign of embarrassment or annoyance.

'How splendid!' she said. 'Do you know I don't think I ever met a deacon before, much less an arch one.'

'An archdeacon', said Simon, in explanation, 'is not precisely a deacon. He was one once, of course, but that has nothing to

'I once made a Court dress for a bishop's daughter,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Bishops', said Simon hurriedly, 'are quite different.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'I never met one, anyhow, and I don't expect the prince has either. He'll be just as pleased as I am.'

'But do you think—' said Simon, who was beginning to think about his own position now, 'do you think—I mean to say—a night-club—— You said a night-club, didn't you?'

'Oh, it's perfectly respectable,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Nothing could be more proper. I'd take Betty there only that it begins so late. The poor old prince may perhaps be a little—' she raised her empty liqueur glass to her lips, 'you know what I mean. Nothing in the least offensive, and never uproarious. In fact, when he's that way he's rather inclined to weep over his sufferings in Russia and all that. Bolshies, you know. After all, he's been through it's not surprising that he finds a glass of wine rather comforting. Besides, very little upsets him. I've seen him crying like anything after two cocktails and a bottle of beer. That might happen to any one. I should think even an archbishop gets that way occasionally.'

'Never,' said Simon firmly. He was quite sure about this.

'Oh well, an archdeacon, anyhow,' she said. 'Now don't say that archdeacons are never merry.'

'I never saw one affected in that way,' said Simon.

Then he began to think that he had never met an archdeacon in his life and had no knowledge of their

social habits. His testimony to their complete sobriety was rather valueless.

'I'm sure', he said, 'that no archdeacon——'

'Then it's quite time that one did,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'and you may as well make a record by being the first. Besides it's almost a duty, isn't it? How can you tell the deacons you're arch of how wrong it is to drink beer unless you sometimes do it yourself?'

'But I don't think it's wrong to drink beer.'

'Then come along and do it,' she said. 'I won't ask you to take more than one bottle. But you really ought to see the old prince. He plays the piano, by the way. I hope you don't mind that.'

'Not in the least,' said Simon. 'I shall enjoy it.'

'No you won't. Nobody possibly could. He plays things he composes himself. That's why he so often gets—well, careless, before the end of the evening. The only way to get him to stop playing is to offer him a drink, so everybody does. I stood him six myself one night when he started what he calls his Calvi Sonata. There were three movements, but I got off with half of the first. Perhaps he'll only play his Île de Beauté Nocturne to-night. It's quite short.'

CHAPTER X

THERE must have been an enormous number of princes in Russia before the revolution compelled them to seek homes elsewhere. There is scarcely a spot of any note without its Russian refugee prince. A settlement of princes, if they were all collected together, would form a fair-sized town. But apparently they are not a gregarious people. They prefer to find homes for themselves among aliens.

There are ill-natured gossips who say that there are far more Russian princes in existence now than there were in the days when the Tsar ruled. They hint, in fact, that many Russians call themselves princes who are not really princes at all, confident that in the confused state of the Russian Debrett it will be impossible to check their claims or judge of their right to the title.

This may be true, but it is much pleasanter to believe that all the titles are genuine and that their increase merely shows the futility of revolutions. What is the good of establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat if it is going to end in increasing the numbers of the very class which it is desirable to destroy? And this is what seems to have happened. Accurate figures are hard to come by, but if there has been no material increase there has certainly not been the decrease which the revolutionaries hoped for and expected.

It is, of course, also possible that the more cynical explanation of this increase of princes may be the true one. It is only too clearly plausible, for apart from the honour of the thing there is distinct commercial advantage in being a prince. A milliner, for instance, is more likely to sell the hats she makes if she is a princess, for many people feel that an aristocratic origin is as desirable in a hat as a pedigree in a pet dog. There is something agreeable to most of us in the thought that our shoes are being mended by a prince. Thereby a prince who sets up as a cobbler has an advantage, unfair perhaps, but real, over his untitled competitors in the same trade. Other things being equal most people prefer to employ a prince. They are even willing to pay a little extra for the privilege, getting the worth of their money in joyful boastings to their friends. 'H.R.H.,' they say, mistakenly for the letters do not apply to Russian princes, 'H.R.H. has left a nail sticking up in the sole of my right shoe. I must speak to him about it.'

Yet it can scarcely be true that there has been any general creation of new princes. Every prince and princess is so unquestionably related to the noble families of Europe that there can be no doubt about their titles. In Bari, for instance, there is a princess who does washing. She has seven duke cousins, five of them in Italy. No one would refuse to believe in her title even if she lost a collar or two every week, or deny a tribute of respect to her husband who carries home the clothes in large baskets.

The prince who established the night-club in Calvi must have been one of the last to escape from Russia. If he had been earlier in the field he would have been

able to find a better place for business than this tiny Corsican town. A club in Nice or Cannes might be a very paying thing, leading ultimately to the re-establishment of the princely fortune. In Calvi there is no such golden chance. The prince who settled there would not have done so if any better 'pitch' had been vacant.

He was not altogether penniless when he reached the safety of our still unemancipated western Europe. Sewn into the lining of his coat were a number of gems, prised out of their settings for ease of concealment and transport. The prince believed that these jewels, if wisely sold, would provide him with enough for his needs, a sum of money which, wisely invested, would bring him in a comfortable income for the rest of his life. They were family jewels and some of them had been in the possession of his ancestors for hundreds of years. His eight largest diamonds, for instance, came out of a brooch presented to a far-off grandfather by Catherine the Great—a tribute to his personal charm, so it was supposed.

It is a sad thing to record about so famous a monarch, but when these stones came to be sold it turned out that they were not diamonds at all. The same thing was true about some other gems, supposed to be particularly valuable; the famous Warsaw ruby, for instance, which an ancestor in the diplomatic service had succeeded in looting during the second partition of Poland.

The result of all these disappointments was that the prince was left with very little money, not nearly enough to live on if treated as invested capital. But the prince was a man of resource and he was determined to go on living if he could. He made up his

mind to use what money he had in establishing a business which, if well managed, would be profitable.

Hearing from friends of his own class that there was no Russian prince in Calvi he went there and, so to speak, 'pegged out his claim'. He felt sure that no compatriot of his own would attempt to interfere with him. There is a strong feeling of class loyalty among Russian refugees.

Having settled in Calvi the next question was how he was to live. He had no princess. It was generally understood that she had perished in the revolution and the prince always spoke of her with tears. A night-club suggested itself to him one evening when he saw a party of American tourists walking about looking for amusement and obviously thirsty.

The idea was a good one. Almost any one who is accustomed to the social life of an aristocracy can manage a night-club in a country where such establishments are not harried by laws. It is much the same thing as entertaining guests in an ancestral home, except that in the night-club the guests pay. It is also a business in which the title of prince is particularly valuable. Many people who do not want to dance or play cards will come to a club for the sake of shaking hands with a real prince.

Since the sale of drinks is the chief means of profit it is plainly advantageous that the club shall be in such a position that clients are likely to become thirsty in getting there. The citadel in Calvi offers such a situation since it is impossible to drive to the upper parts of it, and climbing on foot is hot work in Corsica, even at night. The prince rented a flat high up in the citadel in a very ancient and picturesque building. The flat

could only be reached from a smelly lane, through a low and narrow doorway, along a winding, stone-paved corridor, really a sort of tunnel. This, as the prince realized, was all to the good. The place was indeed difficult of access which might be a disadvantage in other forms of business, but for a night-club intended for tourists, this was an actual gain. There was a suggestion of adventure in the approach, and when the prince put a single electric light with a pale blue globe over the narrow doorway there was a distinct hint of esoteric vice within. Esoteric vice is an attractive thing, especially to Americans, who get very little of it in their own country, where Hollywood sets its iniquities in the broad light of day.

The prince spent the remainder of his fortune in decorating the flat and he displayed the greatest skill and taste. He adopted a Moorish style. There were alcoves with fretwork arches over their entrances. There were divans, soft but extremely uncomfortable to sit on, because there was no way of leaning back. There were cushions everywhere, especially on the floor, though a space was left clear for dancing. There was a grand piano and two mandolins, though nobody ever played them. There was a kind of cave, stone-floored and roofed with imitation stone, which rose in a curved vaulting. It was very dimly lighted, but it could be seen that it was full of bottles. The prince engaged a Corsican boy, who wore a white apron over a brigand's uniform. It was he who uncorked the bottles and poured the contents into immensely tall, narrow wine-glasses with thin stems. These he set before the customers on trays made of hammered brass.

While the period of American prosperity lasted the place did very well. The prince, who had a natural flair for advertising, managed to start a story that it had originally been the seraglio of a Turkish pasha, a mysterious potentate with a good deal of the sheikh about him and a cultivated taste in Circassian slaves. The prince, so it came to be understood, had taken over the whole thing, alcoves, divans and all, at an enormous price. Each fresh batch of American tourists heard this from their predecessors and the story acquired many picturesque additions.

All this gave the place a reputation of the most thrilling kind and there was always a hope that an odalisque or a geisha or whatever such people are called, a girl forgotten by the Turkish Pasha or sold with the rest of the effects, might emerge suddenly from one of the gloomier alcoves. Nothing of the sort ever happened or could happen. The prince ran his club on the lines of the strictest respectability, partly because he was a gentleman of unblemished honour, and partly because odalisques are very expensive and he had no money left after he had paid for the decorations and a sufficient supply of bottles for the cave.

The Americans thronged the place as long as they were able to afford to come to Europe. The prince did his best. He played the piano with the arm-waving abandon of a true artist. It was always his own compositions that he played. These were new to the Americans and most attractive because they were unlike anything they had ever heard before and for the most part amazingly noisy. He was ready, if dragged away from the piano, to drink with any one who paid for the wine and to tell long stories of the glories of

princely houses in Tsar-time Russia. This also the Americans liked, so the prince prospered.

Unfortunately he was not a man with a talent for saving, and he believed, as many wiser people did, that America had discovered the secret of perpetual riches. When it turned out that Wall Street was no better at transmuting baser metals into gold than the medieval alchemists were, when, in plainer language, the slump came, the Americans had to stay at home. They found it hard enough to keep up the instalment payments on their motor-cars and had no money left for European travel.

The prince, along with the shareholders of the Cunard Company and many other people, suffered. The club languished. The few English who still went to it in the evenings, drank beer, an unprofitable liquid to the seller, unless it is disposed of in large quantities. The place was no duller, no more proper, than in the days of its prosperity, but the flavour of wickedness departed from it. Some one killed the Turkish pasha harem legend by pointing out that there had never been any Turks in Corsica. Some one else discovered and said aloud that the vaulting of the wine cave was cardboard, copied from the cheap and spacious decorations of a Soho restaurant.

The prince accepted the turn of fortune with melancholy dignity. He went on playing the piano but much more softly than in the days of prosperity. It was still his own compositions that he played, but they were now often of the nocturne type, deeply tinged with sadness and the sense of the burden of the mystery of human affairs. The piano was out of tune and it became rapidly worse, though this was not altogether a

disadvantage. It disguised the peculiarities of some of the prince's harmonies. He still told his stories to any one who would listen to him, and he still drank, though no longer in the old economical way at some one else's expense. The number of bottles in the cave did not diminish, but the Corsican Brigand potboy, and perhaps the prince himself, knew that most of them were empty.

There were hopes in the prince's heart, just as there were in the heads of the financiers of New York and Chicago, that the wave of prosperity would return. Presidents said confidently that it would. Economists pointed out quite clearly what must be done to bring back the golden days. Statesmen, obeying the economists, established Farm Boards and paid enormous sums to the Federal banks. Still prosperity lingered in its coming and the slump deepened into almost impenetrable gloom. The more the Presidents prophesied, the louder the economists preached, the more daringly the state experimented, the poorer everybody became and along with everybody else the prince in Calvi. Visitors to the club became fewer and fewer until the time came when the prince had very little to eat and there was scarcely any wine left in the vaulted cave. At last there was only Mrs. Halliday left of his clients, and she went there chiefly because she was sorry for the old gentleman and wanted to help him.

Mrs. Halliday—this ought to be clear—was a woman of kindly heart. She had once been in distress and poverty herself. She had been helped and set on the high road to comfortable wealth by a generous friend. The effect, a most unusual one in such cases, was to

make her tender to the lonely and helpless. She washed the prince's shirt for him and drank more of his beer than she wanted because his pathetic helplessness moved her. She took Simon Craven in hand because he seemed a lonely man.

The climb to the top of Calvi citadel is a stiff one. The streets, very roughly paved, are sometimes little better than flights of irregular steps. Mrs. Halliday climbed strongly and swiftly. Simon was out of breath when he reached the narrow archway with the pale blue light over it. He was unaccustomed to steep ascents, for Badakak, being a swampy land, is almost entirely flat. The only climbing which the inhabitants do is on the branches of trees, among which they swing themselves with agility, using hands and feet with equal skill and certainty. In this way they cross their narrower and more crocodile-infested streams, for the branches on either side meet in tangled arches. Simon, though he had adopted many of the habits of his converts, never mastered the monkey art of tree-climbing. So it was that during the whole of his twenty years in Badakak he did no climbing at all, and the ascent of the Calvi citadel, though it would have been nothing to a member of the Alpine Club, and was nothing to Mrs. Halliday, left him completely breathless.

When he reached the arch with the blue light he was panting so fast that he could not speak. He stopped abruptly, his eyes on the lamp. Mrs. Halliday entered the passage and beckoned him to follow. Simon could not say anything because he had no breath, but he raised a protesting hand and shook his head. The blue light had produced on him the effect it always produced on the Americans, indeed the effect it was

intended to produce on every one. There was a subtle suggestion of evil about the place. Beyond the light, at the end of the echoey stone passage, far off in impenetrable gloom lurked, or might lurk—what? But the expectation which filled the Americans with thrilled delight had quite the opposite effect on Simon. It frightened him. He felt that this was no place for an archdeacon of unblemished reputation.

Mrs. Halliday came back and took him by the arm.

'Come on,' she said, 'the poor old prince will be frightfully disappointed if nobody turns up and I don't believe there'll be anybody there to-night if we don't go. Besides, after that climb you must want a glass of beer.'

Simon did. He wanted a drink of some sort as badly as he ever had in his life, and beer of all liquids would have been his choice. But he was a good man, so good that he might have been called saintly. Nothing, not a parched tongue and lips cracked by thirst would have induced him to seek what he wanted in an evil place.

Once more Mrs. Halliday guessed his feelings and guessed rightly.

'My dear Archdeacon——' she said. 'Now is that the proper way to address you, or should I say venerable sir?—Don't be silly. The prince is a perfect lamb, and I am really quite respectable, though I dare say I don't look it with no stockings on.'

She picked up the end of her skirt and displayed a plump and mottled calf.

Simon had not noticed her stockingless state while they were climbing the steep streets. He could not help noticing it when she picked up her skirt. It did not occur to him that the want of stockings had anything

to do with respectability. In all Badakak there is not one woman who wears, or even owns, a pair of stockings. In Simon's view of things there is no connexion between virtue and stockings, any more than there is, in the opinion of the archdeacons in England, any necessary connexion between gloves and chastity.

There is in the truly pure heart an unsuspiciousness of evil which provokes the sneers of the cynical but is really a divine kind of wisdom. A man less innocent than Simon might then and there have turned away from Mrs. Halliday. She stood at the entrance of a tunnel deeply suggestive of evil. A blue light fell upon her. She held a skirt almost knee-high with one hand. She had a compelling hold with the other hand of his arm, but Simon never for a moment suspected her. His was the charity which thinketh no evil of any one. He yielded to the pressure of his arm and let her lead him into the dark tunnel.

CHAPTER XI

MRS. HALLIDAY was wrong in supposing that she would find the prince's night-club entirely empty. There was one other visitor, the girl who had paraded on the quay in the striking suit of pyjamas. She was not, apparently, a guest from whom the prince could expect to make much profit, for she had no drink of any sort in front of her. The brigand potboy in his white apron stood listlessly at the mouth of the cave. He had given up the hope of an order from the pyjama girl. He roused himself to attention when Mrs. Halliday and Simon entered.

The girl, though not profitable, was picturesque. She lay stretched on one of the divans with cushions piled behind her. She had chosen one which was covered entirely in black and the cushions also were a dull black. Her brilliant garments made a striking contrast. She must have chosen her place through an instinctive love of the picturesque for its own sake without any thought of the effect on spectators. Until Mrs. Halliday and Simon entered there were no spectators for her to appeal to. The potboy, no doubt bored by idleness, was looking the other way, a cigarette drooping forlornly from the corner of his mouth. The prince was at the piano playing a very mournful nocturne, composed that day under the influence of the decay of his business prospects.

Mrs. Halliday glanced at the girl, then at Simon, then at the girl again. She was in the condition of double-mindedness disapproved of by St. James. Her first feeling was a natural, professional admiration for the pyjamas. She had admired them on the quay while the girl paraded up and down. She admired them still more in their setting of dull black. It was an artist's appreciation of the beautiful combined with a trader's recognition of the selling value of striking novelty. Mrs. Halliday felt almost certain that she could find a market for such garments in London.

Her next feeling was a sudden fear that Simon would be shocked and perhaps driven to instant flight. The girl came nearer to her idea of an odalisque than any one she had ever seen before in the prince's club. A glance at her face assured Mrs. Halliday, who was no fool in such matters, that the girl was perfectly respectable, but she was not at all sure that Simon would realize that. The girl's attitude—she seemed to be in a state of deep dejection—and her clothes might very well startle an archdeacon. There is the story of a lady who sent a message to a bishop asking whether he had any objection to her appearing as Eve at a fancy-dress ball organized by the purser of a cruising ship on which the bishop was travelling. His lordship replied that he had no objection at all, provided it was Eve after the fall. Mrs. Halliday remembered the story and wished that her companion was a bishop. An archdeacon can scarcely be expected to be either so liberal-minded or so witty.

Her glance at Simon reassured her. He was not in the least shocked. It is indeed very difficult to shock an entirely innocent man. He was looking at

the girl with mild appreciation, as a man might look at a beautiful flower. Mrs. Halliday felt safe in taking another long look at the pyjamas, a critical and appraising look. Her admiration for them increased.

The prince finished his nocturne with a series of discordant crashes, the emotional expression of a man who has been ill-treated by a world in which every single thing has gone abominably wrong. Then he left the piano, crossed the room, and greeted Mrs. Halliday with almost exaggerated courtesy. He bowed low. He knocked his heels together. He kissed her hand. He called her 'Gracious lady' in German, and 'Amiable madame' in French.

'This', said Mrs. Halliday, introducing Simon, 'is my friend the archdeacon, and you'll have to talk English to him, prince, for he doesn't know six words of French.'

'Ah, but my English is so bad,' said the prince. It was not by any means so bad as he thought. 'How can I speak my English to a priest of the Church, the so-respected Church of England?'

He gazed at Simon as he spoke, at first with an expression of the respect due to an archdeacon, then with a gradually increasing expression of amazement and horror.

'But it cannot be,' he said. 'God forbid! It cannot be that the English Church also, so great, so strong, so learned, that it also like my beloved Church, it also'—he held up both hands with an eloquent gesture of despair—'is persecuted by the abominable Bolsheviks.'

Simon was wearing an old and very shabby pair of grey flannel trousers, an alpaca jacket, once black,

now turning green from exposure to the sun and sea air. His shirt was open at the neck and earlier in the day he had discarded his tie. He looked more like a tramp than a dignitary of the Church. The prince, in supposing the persecution of religion in England, had drawn a wrong inference from appearances.

'Oh no,' said Simon feebly. 'At least not that I know of.'

He had not the least idea why the prince should suppose that the English Church had fallen into the hands of the Bolsheviks. Mrs. Halliday, much quicker than he was, followed the working of the prince's mind.

'The English Church isn't persecuted in the least,' she said; 'in fact, it's quite popular. What puts you wrong is that the archdeacon isn't wearing his best clothes. But he has the proper things—gaiters and what-you-call-ems and all the rest of the rig-out. You have, haven't you?'

'Yes,' said Simon, 'but it didn't occur to me to put them on.'

'So naughty of you,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Just like you, Prince. You've never once worn your coronation robes since I knew you, and I'm simply longing to see them.'

'Ah!' said the prince, 'my robes, where are they? The snows of last year are my robes.'

'Come now,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'you must have something left. An ermine tippet or a court sword, or something. Come to dinner to-morrow night at the hotel and put on whatever you've got. The archdeacon will wear his, won't you, Archdeacon? And if I could get a suit of those pyjamas——' She

looked at the girl on the divan. 'But I know that wouldn't do. The archdeacon says I'm far too fat.'

'I never——' said Simon. 'You must have misunderstood me. I couldn't have said that.'

'You think it, though,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'and so does the prince. And you're both quite right. Shall we say eight o'clock for dinner?'

From time to time she invited the prince to dinner, but not very often. The thing had to be done delicately. The least suggestion that she wished to provide him with a meal—which was exactly what she did want to do—would have drawn a courteous but firm refusal from the prince. The feelings of a gentleman survived in him. He would rather have gone hungry than accept food given out of a kindly thought that he wanted it.

'But——' said Simon, who did not want to dress up in clothes he had never worn in order to soothe the prickly pride of a prince.

'Exactly,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'What the archdeacon wants now is a drink.'

'Alas!' said the prince, looking at the cave where the empty bottles were stacked, 'the good wine is no more. The cocktail! It is possible that we may still make the cocktail. I do not know, but it is possible.'

He beckoned to the brigand potboy, who crossed the room, his cigarette, which did not seem to be alight, still drooping from his lips.

'Beer', said Mrs. Halliday, 'is the archdeacon's favourite drink.'

'Ah!' said the prince triumphantly, for he still had a good supply of beer. 'The glorious beer!

The beer of Old England ! Is it not so ? And the good Church of England it drinks the beer. It is no wonder that it is secure in the hearts of the English people. Not like our poor Church, though it too was beloved. Ah, how beloved !'

'Now don't cry, Prince,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'There's nothing to cry about.'

The brigand brought three large bottles of beer and set them down. Mrs. Halliday paid for them, while Simon, mumbling protests, was feeling in his pocket for some money.

'The Church of England,' said the prince, raising his glass, 'and may it be that no Bolshevik ever persecutes her. Not like the poor Russian Church with her so beautiful choruses.'

'Your Church will be all right in the end,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Don't you fret.'

But the prince did fret. His first draught of beer, a long one, made him sadder than ever. He began a story, addressed to Simon, about the misery endured by a Russian priest whom he knew well. The man appeared to have qualified for a martyr's crown, but the prince's English failed him when he got to the more thrilling parts of the story, and Simon was left uncertain about the end.

The priest might have perished by the hand of an assassin in a cellar below a Bolshevik prison. At one time Simon thought that was what had happened. But a moment later he heard of him swimming a river at the far side of which was Rumania and safety. Russian soldiers on the other bank shot at him with revolvers. The end of that adventure, like the issue of the nasty situation in the Russian prison, was im-

possible to find out, for the prince broke down in the telling and wept unrestrainedly.

The brigand, in response to a nod from Mrs. Halliday, brought another bottle of beer for the prince, the only one of the party who had finished his first bottle.

'If your Church had the sense to buck up a bit and not take things lying down——' said Mrs. Halliday.

'That is so,' said the prince, cheered by the sight of the fresh bottle. 'And she does buck up. In her sufferings she wins the devotion even of those who once despised her.'

Here he began another story, which, like the tale of the persecuted priest, interested Simon intensely. It was about a professor of history in a university, the name of which it was impossible to catch. In the days of the Church's prosperity, while the Tsar still reigned, the professor had written books in which he attacked the Christian faith. Terrible books.

The odalisque girl in pyjamas rose from her sea of black cushions and crossed the room to where the potboy stood. She whispered to him. He nodded and turned on a mechanical organ which began to play a waltz. The machine was hideously out of tune, even worse than the piano. Its music was atrociously vulgar. It might have been supposed that the prince, a composer and an executant himself, would have shown some signs of distress. But he remained unaffected and went on with his story just as if there had been no discordant interruption.

'Having seen the persecution of the Church and the sufferings of the faithful priests, this professor changed his mind about Christianity and wrote two other books.'

The odalisque girl and the potboy began to dance. He had discarded his white apron and the brigand costume harmonized with the pyjamas. They danced very well. Mrs. Halliday, who had never been much interested in the story of the repentant historian, watched them. The pyjamas looked better than ever.

'Prince,' she said, 'who's that girl, and where did she get those pyjamas?'

The prince waved the inquiry away with a waggly motion of his right hand. He could not be interrupted in the story of the professor's tragedy by frivolous talk about girls and pyjamas.

'How splendid,' said Simon.

He was not looking at the girl in pyjamas, though he might very well have called her splendid. His mind was full of the professor and his amended version of European history.

'But alas!' said the prince, 'they read his new books.'

Books are, of course, meant to be read, and the author, even if he is an historian, had a legitimate grievance when they are not. But the professor's books were unfortunately read by the wrong people. This often happens, and the author is always the sufferer. A novel of unquestionable genius, an epoch-making advance in the art of fiction, intended to be read by Mr. Gerald Gould of the *Observer*, falls by chance into the hands of an uncultivated man who wants a good story. It is treated with blasphemous abuse. The uncultivated man feels that he has been swindled out of seven-and-sixpence, and he would throw stones at the author if he could. So important it is that a book should find its right public.

The repentant professor's later books were read by the Russian governing classes who did not like them at all, though they had liked his earlier work. He was dragged before the tribunal which in Russia takes the place of our Sunday critics, but has more than their power. He was turned out of his professorship and sentenced to perpetual exile. If it had not been for his original, atheistic books, he would have been executed.

'I do wish you'd tell me who that girl is,' said Mrs. Halliday.

But the prince was weeping so bitterly over the professor's fate that he did not hear her. Simon, though he did not actually cry, was profoundly moved. He did not hear her either. Mrs. Halliday signalled to the brigand as he swept past, languidly graceful, with the pyjama girl in his arms. The dance stopped at once and the girl went back to her divan. The brigand fetched more beer, this time three bottles.

'In honour of so great a triumph of the faith of the Church,' said the prince, 'the conversion of so great an enemy, I composed a Te Deum. Not a great thing. I am no Moskowski. But a Te Deum. Allow me. I will play it for you.'

He rose to go to the piano. The brigand, a tactful youth who knew what his master was at, switched off the mechanical organ.

'Sit down, Prince,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Here's more beer coming and you must tell me who that girl is.'

The prince stood uncertainly. The prospect of more beer was attractive, but at the moment he wanted to play his Te Deum even more than he wanted to drink beer. Mrs. Halliday caught his arm.

'Who is she?' she said.

'A mannequin,' said the prince impatiently, 'merely a mannequin.'

The brigand set down the beer before them. The prince, still standing, drank half a tumblerful.

'But where is he now?' said Simon. 'What is he doing? How does he live?'

The prince took another draught of beer.

'He designs robes', he said, 'for the Princess Matinski in Paris. It is there that his historical knowledge helps greatly. He designs robes out of the past, and yet of the moderns most modern.'

'Princess Matinski!' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Yes,' said the prince. 'Nadine, my cousin.'

But Mrs. Halliday did not care a pin whose cousin the Princess Matinski might be. What interested her was that the lady was the most famous of all Parisian dressmakers, the only dressmaker in the world whom she regarded as her own superior.

'How strange!' said Simon, 'and does he still write books?'

'He no longer writes,' said the prince, 'but he sings in the chorus of the Russian Church in Paris, and one day he will sing the Te Deum to the music that I have written for him, not knowing that it is the music of his own soul that he sings. I have not told him that. No. But I have sent him the Te Deum, and you shall hear it.'

He swallowed the last mouthful of his beer and went to the piano.

Mrs. Halliday ran after him.

'Is that girl one of Matinski's mannequins?' she said.

'Yes, yes,' said the prince. 'What does it matter? Yes, yes.'

He struck a chord. His fingers ran lightly along the keys. Two more loud chords followed. 'Te De-e-e-um,' sang the prince, in a thin high voice.

'I was right about those pyjamas then,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I knew they were something out of the common, though I never thought of their being Matinski's.'

The prince stopped singing, or trying to, as the score of the music became more complex and demanded all his attention. Mrs. Halliday left the piano and sat down on the black divan beside the girl in pyjamas. Simon, with an untouched glass of beer in front of him, was left alone to listen to the Te Deum and meditate on the triumph of faith which had turned the professor of history into a designer of pyjamas for wealthy women.

CHAPTER XII

THE Te Deum, a composition which would have required a brass band and a large choir to do it justice, came to a tumultuous end in a series of crashing chords. The prince, who admired it greatly, began it again, evidently with the intention of going through the whole thing a second time. Mrs. Halliday put a stop to that. She rolled off the divan, ran over to the piano, took the prince by the arm and dragged him away. When she got him to the table at which they had been sitting she offered him Simon's untouched glass of beer.

'Why didn't you tell me sooner', she said, 'that that girl is one of Matinski's mannequins? What is she doing in a place like this anyhow?'

Before answering the prince drank the greater part of Simon's beer. The playing of jubilant Te Deums is exhausting and thirsty work. When he did speak he seemed to be wandering a little from the point of Mrs. Halliday's questions.

'My poor cousin,' he said, 'my poor Nadine, who was once so great, so rich. The Matinski family——'

'Not so poor at all,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'She's the only dressmaker in Europe who charges more than I do.'

'She charges, yes,' said the prince, 'but what good is it to charge if no one pays?'

'We all suffer in that way,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'We have to add our bad debts on to the accounts of the people who do pay. That's all.'

'But of course. That goes without saying. But with my poor cousin there are no longer those who even say they will pay. They do not buy, you understand. No longer can any one buy in a world corrupted by the proletariat. It is what is called the economic crisis. No buyers anywhere. Cheapness! Slump! Desolation! And especially for my poor Nadine. She cannot sell, not one gown.'

'Well, I can,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Give me the right article and I'll sell it. That is why I made up my mind to get those pyjamas and a few more suits like them. I decided that the moment I saw that girl on the quay. But what I can't make out is why she's here in Calvi. Who's going to look at Matinski's clothes in a place like this?'

'She is a mannequin,' said the prince. 'She displays in order to sell.'

'Yes. But why here?' said Mrs. Halliday, for the prince had evidently missed the point of her question. 'How could she expect to sell Matinski's models in a place like this?'

'It is all so sad,' said the prince. 'In Paris, no business. No one to buy. Well, let us try Cannes. In Cannes, no one. Not an American. Not an Englishwoman. No one. But the heart is brave, and we of the Russian nobility, we have suffered so much that we are not easily dismayed. The princess says "Try Nice." In Nice it is worse. The mannequin parades on the beach, in the hotels, in the salons de danse, everywhere. And she walks well, that one.'

People look at her, but not the people who buy. There are no longer any people who buy. At last the brave Nadine loses courage. There is no more money. They turn the girl, the mannequin out of the hotel because she cannot pay. What to do? Is the girl to starve? Nadine knows that I am here. She writes to me. I say "Send your mannequin to me." I cannot perhaps sell the gowns, but I can at least feed her.'

'But can you?' said Mrs. Halliday, who knew something of the prince's house-keeping.

'At least there is still beer,' said the prince simply. 'So the girl arrived. She is a good girl. She sees that I am not rich. She says "Here also I will display the gowns of the Princess Matinski. It may be that there will be some one who will buy."' '

'There will be,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'There'll be me, if I can get the things at any reasonable price. But why on earth didn't you send her straight to me the moment she arrived? You might have known that I'm the only person in the whole of Calvi the least likely to buy clothes like those.'

The prince straightened himself in his seat and squared his shoulders.

'Madame,' he said, 'dear madame, I am poor. I am old. I am dirty. Yes, do not contradict me. I know that I am dirty. I drink too much. I admit it. I am in every way down and out. But I am still a gentleman, and you are my friend. A gentleman does not—does not sponge on his friends. He does not cadge. I would not ask you to buy lest you should buy out of charity.'

'That's all very well,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'but

only for the merest chance I shouldn't have known about those pyjamas. I should never have seen them if I hadn't been drinking brandy with the archdeacon in a quayside pub. That was just luck'

'And you will buy?' said the prince. Then he raised both hands and threw his head back. 'Thanks be to God,' he said. 'My poor Nadine, once more she sells something.'

Simon listened to the conversation without at first quite understanding what it was about. By degrees he realized that the odalisque girl on the black divan was a kind of walking advertisement for the garments of a Paris dressmaker, that the Paris dressmaker was nearly related to the prince, that—— But the next thought was too amazing.

'Do you mean to say', he said, 'that the professor who was converted to Christianity designed the clothes that lady is wearing? It's most astonishing.'

It was. A man who began as a kind of modern Gibbon, with sneers at Christianity, who went on in due time to become an Athanasius, defying the Bolshevik world in defence of the faith, that such a man should design pyjamas for the richest and most fashionable women in Europe was a bewildering thought. And he also sang, sang in a church choir, a Te Deum composed in his own honour. He was marked out as a man of unique achievement. Had any one else in the world done and done successfully such different things? Life in Badakak seemed a simple affair compared to life in modern Europe. There a convert occasionally wanted to present his collection of heads to the church as a thank-offering, and one chieftain, out of pure goodness of heart, tried

to make over four of his seven wives to Simon. But the conversion of a Russian professor was a far more complex thing. Simon was bewildered when he thought of it.

'It is sad,' said the prince, beginning to cry again softly, 'but what can he do? They have taken his professorship from him, and like the rest of us he finds it necessary to eat. You English who are so happy and so rich, you do not know what our sufferings have been.'

'If he designs Matinski's models for her,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'he ought to do pretty well out of it. I have to pay a stiff price for them, I know.'

'But they are so beautiful,' said the prince. 'What does the price matter when they are beautiful. I myself have written a fantasia—oh, quite a trifle, light as air—in F sharp, to express the beauty of Nadine's wonderful creations. Not that I have seen them, except for those which this mannequin displays I have seen none. But I know. I know, because I know Nadine's exquisite soul. So I write my fantasia. This is how it goes—in F sharp, you understand.'

He hummed what seemed to be the beginning of a gay little air, tapping the table lightly with his outspread fingers. He had spilt a good deal of his last glass of beer and his fingers got wet. It may have been this discomfort which turned his thoughts to the piano.

'But you shall hear it,' he said.

Simon, in spite of his success with the aeolian harp in his cathedral, was not musical. He listened to the fantasia with only moderate pleasure. Mrs. Halliday was plainly impatient. The only thing which com-

forted her was that it was not nearly so long or so loud as the *Te Deum*.

'Prince,' she said, when the final tinkles died away, 'is there a bottle of wine left in that artificial cave of yours?'

'Of wine, no,' said the prince. 'Of what the people of this island call wine, perhaps a bottle, perhaps two. But I do not recommend it, I cannot recommend it to my friends.'

'Well,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'it can't be helped, and I dare say we've had enough to drink. But I would have liked to celebrate this occasion in some way even if the wine isn't first rate. What do you think, Archdeacon? Have we had too much already? As an archdeacon you ought to know.'

Simon thought that the prince had had more than enough; but he could not very well say that. Nor did he like to say anything which might suggest that Mrs. Halliday had drunk as much as she ought to. He took the whole odium on himself.

'I certainly have,' he said.

But the brigand, though he did not understand English, managed somehow to catch the drift of the conversation. He produced fresh glasses and a bottle of the wine which Simon had thought so excellent when he drank it on the steamer.

After all, though the prince was certainly lachrymose, the party could hardly be condemned as a debauch. Seven bottles of lager beer and a bottle of very light Corsican wine divided among three people ought not to upset sobriety.

'Now about the price of those pyjamas,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Has that girl got authority to sell?'

'I myself', said the prince, 'will telegraph tomorrow to Nadine. I will say "Name Price. It is my friend Madame Halliday who buys. It is only necessary to name price and the deal is closed."' '

'You'll say nothing of the sort,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'You've got to remember what I have to pay to get those things into England. It isn't simply the duty on silk. That's nothing to howl about. It's the scandalous way they make us dressmakers pay up for any models we intend to sell.'

'The trade of the world', said the prince, and he was evidently near tears again, 'is ruined by the imbecility of those who make the tariff. How can any one buy when he has to pay twice, once to the princess, who sells, and an even bigger price to the fools who govern us. If all the world must pay twice, then the trade of the world dies, and every one is poorer and my dear Nadine cannot live, and the professor who sings in the chorus of the Russian Church he expires of hunger and cold, all on account of these imbecile tariffs.'

The arguments of the advocates of Free Trade, a class extinct everywhere except in England and rapidly dwindling there—could hardly be put better or more concisely. And the prince spoke with deep feeling, for he had already consumed more than half the despised Corsican wine. The sense of the *lacrymæ rerum*, the pervading sorrowfulness of human affairs, was affecting him again.

'If Matinski will give them to me at any sort of moderate price,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'I'll take twelve suits. Has that mannequin got as many as that with her? If she has tell her to go and put them on and I'll have a look at them.'

'The wonderful business ability of the English,' said the prince, cheering up suddenly. 'Even in the most charming ladies it is there! If only—— But alas! we have it not, we Russians. I will write a sonata, no, a march, a march *militaire* of the business instinct of the Englishwoman. Thus it shall go.' He whistled a few staccato notes, tapping the beery table firmly with his fingers. 'And thus, *Allegro cum spiritu*. You catch the motif, Mr. Archdeacon. The firm step of the English business woman, who advances across the world, treading down tariffs. The triumphant Englishwoman of affairs. Thus, swingingly, goes the march.'

He flung his arms up and brought down his whole ten fingers, indeed the greater part of the palms of his hands in a rhythmical succession of bangs.

'Don't play it on the piano, Prince,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'at least not till you've got it properly composed. It would be a pity to spoil the effect.'

'It seems to me to be getting a little late,' said Simon, who did not want any more than Mrs. Halliday did to hear the march of the triumphant English shopkeeper. Nor did he want to see the other eleven suits of pyjamas.

'You're quite right,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'and I ought to see that Betty is safe in bed. We'll see the rest of the clothes to-morrow, Prince, and by that time you'll have finished composing your march.'

'It shall be dedicated to you,' said the prince, 'and it shall be played by the orchestra in the Vienna Opera House. Already it shapes itself in my mind. I fling myself into it. Thus——'

He stood up and stepped across and across the room,

humming the notes of his march as he went. He was a pathetic figure, with bent shoulders, a lined face, an imperfectly shaved chin and his bare heels showed through the holes in his socks as he rose on his toes.

'I really must mend the poor darling's socks for him.' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I wonder if he has a second pair. That's the worst of doing anything with the prince's clothes. You have to get him to go to bed while you mend them, and he hates doing that. You haven't seen the prince's bed, of course, Archdeacon. If you had you'd understand his dislike of it. Still, I must do something about those socks.'

'I have several spare pairs,' said Simon. 'I wonder——'

'Not on your life,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'That's what makes the prince so difficult. You simply can't give him things. He explodes if you try. Silly of him, but there it is. I'm thankful I wasn't born like that.'

CHAPTER XIII

THE water in Calvi Bay is so warm that it is possible to stay in it for hours at a time without discomfort. It possesses in a high degree the buoyant quality of all Mediterranean water. Swimming from place to place is a slow business compared to the swift dashes of racers in fresh-water baths. On the other hand scarcely any exertion is required in order to keep afloat, and when muscles are tired it is always possible to lie quite still and achieve complete rest. The water is also very clear, so clear that the sandy bottom can be seen even at a great depth, and every motion of a fish or a diver may be watched from the surface.

All this made Betty's diving lessons an easy business. There was no need to hurry over them, no fear of blue fingers and shivering bodies afterwards, no fear of getting tired, no difficulty in watching the movements of Simon's arms and legs while he sped through the water. Betty learned fast. Simon delighted in teaching her. He was happier in the company of this child than he had been anywhere since he left Badakak, indeed happier than he had ever been there. He was teaching, as he had always been, but it is easier and pleasanter, though no doubt less noble, to teach a cheerful English maiden to dive than to instruct superstition-ridden savages in the Christian faith.

In a few days Betty could dive as well as he could and they devised the most fascinating games to play above and below the surface. There was one which Betty called 'Submarines', and since no submarine fulfils its natural function without a ship to be torpedoed, Mrs. Halliday was brought into the game. She made it a condition that she should not actually be sunk. She said that no bathing cap yet devised would keep her hair dry under water, and that no waviness, however permanent, could be expected to survive many immersions. Except for this—a condition which many a merchantman would have been glad to make during the war—she was prepared to act the part of the *Lusitania*. She swam along, slowly indeed, but as fast as she could, taking a zigzag course in the most approved fashion. Betty and Simon from a suitable distance, after a due display of an upstretched hand called a periscope, dived and tried—at least Betty tried—to ram the ship with her head. Simon, more often than not, deliberately tried not to. He was on the friendliest terms with Mrs. Halliday and was no longer in the least afraid of her, but the thought of striking her ribs hard with his head or shoulder, still made him a little uncomfortable.

After the bathing came long meals, eaten with sharp appetites. Simon, though he never once ordered a bottle of champagne, retained his table in the window. Mrs. Halliday and Betty joined him there, in spite of some muttered grumbles from Eugene, who did not like to see his best table occupied by unprofitable guests. He was reconciled to this waste only because there were hardly any other guests. The French couple went away. Two English spinsters were there

for three days, but they drank nothing but water, and so had a table in a dark corner. An Englishman stayed for a single night, and drank a good deal of Corsican wine. He looked like a schoolmaster, but must have been something else, for no school is wise enough to take holidays in June. He was not, in Eugene's eyes, a serious candidate for a window-table.

After this meal, during the hottest part of the day, came sleep, closed jalousies, locked doors and silence save for the quiet murmur of the sea. Betty found these hours—there were at least two of them—tiresome, for she was at an active age, and her lungs, if there had been anything the matter with them, were completely cured. Simon, exhausted and nerve-shattered by his long years of work in the jungles of Badakak, recovered strength and self-confidence day by day. Mrs. Halliday surrendered frankly to the joys of idleness. She did not even make a pretence that it was doing her good, for though she worked hard in London she never admitted that she wanted to recuperate.

One fear alone troubled her. She might, and probably would, grow uncomfortably fat. Living the life she did in Calvi this was likely enough to happen, but she did not let the thought worry her much. Only, as a precaution, she insisted on going every evening to the prince's night-club. This meant a steady climb up the steep streets of the citadel, a form of exercise likely to reduce weight and slim the figure. It did very little in this way for Mrs. Halliday, but that was because she felt bound to drink beer for the prince's sake, and inclined to drink it for her own after the long climb.

Simon, who soon got over his nervous apprehension of evil in the club, went with her. He was interested in the prince's long and often lachrymose accounts of the Russian Church. He had the happy thought of bringing with him one evening his Greek Testament. The prince, who was a remarkably good linguist, read aloud a chapter or two, using the modern Greek pronunciation. Simon listened with interest and emotion. He believed that these were the very sounds made by St. Paul when he preached at Athens and by St. Luke when he read his Gospel out loud to the Excellent Theophilus. The illusion was a little difficult to maintain, for the prince, though he read with deep piety, used to stop now and then for a glass of beer, or if his glass were empty to look round hopefully for a fresh bottle. It was an odd way, perhaps, in spite of the beer, an unprecedented way of spending an evening in a night-club, but the severest Puritan could scarcely have censured the archdeacon for it. No archdeacon, even the strictest, would have been willing to miss such a chance of hearing about the Russian Church. After a few evenings Simon knew as much as any English ecclesiastic about the history, organization and ritual of the Orthodox Church in Holy Russia. He also learned, as few archdeacons do, the modern, which is perhaps also the ancient pronunciation of words like 'hudor' and 'gunee' which occur again and again in the Greek Testament.

Mrs. Halliday, though she cared little about the Russian Church and did not understand a word of the Greek Testament, whichever pronunciation the reader adopted, passed her time agreeably and she hoped profitably. The Princess Matinski's mannequin, the

pyjama girl of the parade on the quay, had lodgings in a flat near the prince's. She had brought with her two cabin trunks full of clothes. Since many of the Princess Matinski's most attractive creations could have been sent by post in large-sized envelopes, the trunks contained a good many garments. The mannequin made no difficulty about transferring her whole stock to the prince's wine cave, from which the brigand waiter moved some hundreds of bottles. From this recess she emerged in gown after gown, suit after suit of pyjamas, and once in a bathing-dress complete with what Mrs. Halliday called a beach wrap. This happened while the prince was explaining the system of episcopal appointments under the Tsar, a subject so absorbing that neither he nor Simon even glanced at the girl.

Mrs. Halliday, choosing with discretion and a very complete knowledge of the possibilities of the London market, accumulated after a time a large number of garments.

Now and then she interrupted the prince and Simon and insisted on discussing prices.

'Don't you take it into your head', she said to the prince, 'that I'm trying to do Matinski down just because I happen to know that she's up against it and must sell. That's not the kind of woman I am, and if I wanted to do such a thing the archdeacon wouldn't let me. I hope you've told Matinski about the archdeacon. He's a sort of guarantee of character for me. You don't mind being that, Archdeacon, do you?'

Simon, though no judge of the prices of evening gowns or beach wraps, was quite ready to believe that Mrs. Halliday was a fair-minded buyer.

'At the same time,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'it won't do for her to get it into her head that I'm a fool or a millionaire. These sales to me are trade sales, subject to all the usual discounts and she must take into consideration the English import duties.'

It was indeed these duties which were Mrs. Halliday's chief trouble. If they had not existed or had been less onerous she could have bought the mannequin's whole stock with good hope of selling it again at a profit. Such is the help which a good stiff system of tariffs gives to those who trade, and, since it is by trading we grow rich, it is plain that protection must make for prosperity.

Letters and telegrams sped from Calvi to Paris and back again to the great annoyance of the prince, who preferred music to commerce, and of Simon, who wanted to hear more about the Russian Church.

It was during these negotiations that a very unfortunate thing happened.

Mrs. Halliday lost the key of her most precious suitcase. The chambermaid, the sister of Alphonse of Marseilles, was questioned and denied all knowledge of the key. When pressed she became indignant and said that she never stole keys. She swept the bedroom several times but failed to find it even in the most unlikely places. Betty was blamed but cleared herself by pointing out that she seldom wore anything except her bathing-dress and therefore could not have pocketed the key. The Swiss reception-clerk surmised that Madame must have taken it down to the beach and dropped it on the sand. Mrs. Halliday scouted the possibility, but consented to offer a small reward, to be paid to any one who returned the key. The Swiss clerk

was confident about this plan, but it proved to be useless. No one came forward with the key or even tried to obtain the reward by producing another key.

What made the disaster really serious was that Mrs. Halliday's whole supply of money, a book of travellers' cheques, issued by the Midland Bank, was locked up in the suit-case. So was her own English cheque-book. It was indeed this fact which first called attention to the loss of the key. Mrs. Halliday had promised, at a certain stage of the negotiations, to send a cheque by the next post to the Princess Matinski. While the cheque-book remained locked up this was impossible, for although she said that cheques written on sheets of note-paper are honoured by banks, the princess would certainly look with deep suspicion on such a document.

The Swiss reception-clerk became doubtful about Mrs. Halliday's honesty or solvency. He did not like people who lost their money just before their weekly bills were presented ; and losing keys, such as this one, was perilously near losing money itself.

It seemed as if the suit-case would have to be cut open, a very inconvenient thing, for it could not be made to shut again. It was the Swiss clerk, very anxious about his bill, who suggested that one of Simon's keys might fit the case.

The travellers' suit-case is now a standardized article. The same thing can be purchased, though at slightly different prices, owing to the vagaries of currencies, in any city in the world. Mrs. Halliday's came from Harrod's in London. Simon had bought one of his in Bombay. It turned out that they were undistinguishable when set side by side, the same colour, the same size, the same shape. This, under

modern conditions of mass production, was probably inevitable. What ought to have been avoided, but was not, was the identity of the keys. Simon's key opened Mrs. Halliday's case without the slightest difficulty. The cheque-book was taken out. The princess's bill was paid, and the reception-clerk's doubts of Mrs. Halliday's solvency disappeared. The sight of her thick wad of travellers' cheques, all guaranteed by an English bank, completely reassured him.

Simon had been supplied in Bombay with two keys for this suit-case. So had Mrs. Halliday in London, but she had left one at home and lost the other. Simon had both his and was not only willing but very glad to give one of them to Mrs. Halliday. It seemed a small return to make for the friendliness shown to him and the pleasure he had found in teaching Betty to dive. If he had only possessed one key he would have given it. Indeed, he would have sacrificed the case itself if Mrs. Halliday had wanted it. Such was his simple gratitude to the first people of his own race and class who had been kind to him since he set out on his mission to Badakak.

CHAPTER XIV

MRS. HALLIDAY'S letters and telegrams became impressively numerous, and the Swiss reception-clerk began to think more highly of her than he did at first. He was a man of great professional acuteness, and it seemed to him that Mrs. Halliday must be a lady of importance, social importance, perhaps, or diplomatic importance, though the letters did not look as if they came from the English Foreign Office. Or possibly of importance in the business world. Certainly she was of importance somewhere, and therefore to be conciliated. He offered her, unasked and without question of extra payment, a room much superior to that first allotted to her, a room with a private bath which she could share with her daughter.

Simon, thanks to the good offices of Alphonse's chambermaid sister, had enjoyed an excellent room from the start ; and the reception-clerk did not regret this, for the hotel was almost empty. But he was under no delusions about Simon. Neither his manners nor his appearance suggested eminence of any kind, and during the whole of his stay Simon only received one letter.

It arrived at dinner-time on one of the evenings when the prince was Mrs. Halliday's guest. Simon was wearing for the first time his full uniform as arch-deacon. He had put off this dressing-up as long as

possible and the prince had twice been disappointed. The third time Mrs. Halliday insisted that Simon should do as she had promised and show himself in all his glory. The clothes were most uncomfortable in the summer heat of Calvi. It took Simon a long time to put them on, because he was quite unfamiliar with the intricacies of knee breeches and gaiters. He hated wearing them, because it seemed to him that they were a particularly objectionable kind of display. He yielded at last, partly out of simple gratitude to Mrs. Halliday, the same feeling which had made him willing to part with his key, and partly in response to the argument which she finally used.

'Don't you think', she said, 'that the prince will have more respect for the English Church if he sees you properly dressed for once? It is so important, isn't it, to keep up our position. They tell me that there's a lot of talk about reunion between the East and West. That's quite true, isn't it?'

Simon admitted that it was. He was not a very diligent reader of either the *Guardian* or the *Church Times* which in Badakak often lay unopened in his hut until they were eaten by yellow ants, a small species, but numerous and particularly fond of paper. This diet was difficult for them to find in Badakak. Indeed, until Simon went out, paper was totally unobtainable, and the yellow ants had to subsist on dried palm leaves. When the Church papers began to arrive in the country in batches of five or six at a time, the ants fell on them with the utmost eagerness and Simon had to be quick if he meant to read them before they were eaten. Still, he did occasionally read them, and he knew that Patriarchs and Archimandrites with

picturesque names were offering right hands of fellowship, benedictions and other desirable things to English ecclesiastics told off to greet them.

This inclined Simon to recognize the value of Mrs. Halliday's view that the prestige of the Church of England should be kept up, especially by her archdeacons.

'Very well then,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'that's just where clothes come in. Would anybody, even a Czecho-Slav or a Rumanian, want to unite with a Church whose bishops—now don't say you aren't a bishop; I know that, but it comes to the same thing—whose bishops come down to dinner in grey flannel trousers and no tie? I wouldn't touch a Church like that myself, and I expect everybody else feels the same. Not that the poor darling prince is exactly what you'd call a dressy man. But that's not his fault. The whole point is that he hasn't any better clothes, whereas you have.'

There was no resisting an argument put in this forcible way, and Simon, intensely devoted to the Church, could do nothing but yield. That is how it happened that he was wearing his full official dress when his single letter reached him. This is a matter of some importance, for clothes produce a subtle and curious effect on the wearer as well as on those who see them. A woman who discovers, in the middle of an important garden-party, that a ladder is developing in one of her stockings, loses self-confidence and her power of pleasing. She is the same woman as before the ladder came, just as pretty, just as witty. Nobody else, perhaps, has noticed the ladder. But she knows that it is there, and immediately wilts. A judge, sitting

on a common chair in an ordinary tweed suit, after having had his hair cut, would find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to pronounce sentence of death on a fellow-man, even a callous murderer. Dressed in his official robes, with a large wig on his head, he is able to perform a painful duty with dignity and a sustaining sense that he is doing what is right. In the same way the accident of Simon's clothes affected his reception of his letter.

It came from Mr. Allworthy of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation which Simon had served so long. Simon had sent his Calvi address to the secretary before leaving Marseilles. Mr. Allworthy, being a good man, had all along been anxious to make a suitable provision for Simon in England. He had tried to secure the Barminster canonry, but the bishop made it clear at last that he had other plans for filling that vacancy. Allworthy, though disappointed, accepted the bishop's promise to do all in his power to secure the living of Brailton for the deserving archdeacon. He looked up Brailton in Crockford's directory and found that the income was good and the work light. It was a post nearly, if not quite as desirable as the lost canonry. He had little doubt of the effectiveness of the bishop's influence, but to make things quite safe, he wrote a letter to the patron, Elizabeth Code, in which he highly recommended Simon. The letter had an unfortunate effect. Elizabeth, worn down by the bishop's persistence, and unable to find a man for herself, was on the point of agreeing to nominate Simon. Allworthy's letter revived her original opposition and even stiffened it.

'I'm not going to be dictated to,' she said to Duckward Kelmer, 'I simply won't have every secretary of every society in England telling me what to do.'

Mr. Allworthy, who had written a very tactful letter, had no idea that he had irritated Elizabeth Code. He wrote to Simon urging him in his own interests as well as for the good of the Church, to return to England as soon as possible. He was a man who liked a mild joke, and he had profited by a sound classical education. He added something about the danger of wintering in Capua.

Simon, though he too had read his Roman history, had forgotten that part of it which deals with Hannibal, whose name he had not heard mentioned once during the twenty years he spent in Badakak. He missed the point of the allusion and supposed vaguely that Allworthy had mixed up Capua with Calvi. It was a natural and excusable mistake, for both names begin with 'Ca' and the end of a word never matters much. He had not, warned or not, the least intention of spending the winter in Calvi. But he might have stayed a little longer if he had not been wearing his archdeacon's suit when he received the letter. The fine sense of irresponsible freedom induced by grey flannel trousers and no tie had left him. An oppressive sense of dignity and duty crushed his spirit. It was plain to him that he must face at once the terrifying life of an archdeacon. He had long dreaded the pitfalls surrounding the position of a beneficed clergyman in England. Now the thing he feared was on him, and he dared not linger. Simon was, in any case, a conscience-ridden man, but there is no doubt that the clothes he wore strengthened the hands which held the reins and put spurs on the heels of the rider.

They were sitting on the balcony outside the dining-room when the letter arrived. There were coffee-cups

and liqueur-glasses on the table, even for Betty a liqueur-glass. There was also an oddly shaped bottle half full of bright green liquid, the liqueur they were drinking. It was the prince who suggested that Eugene should leave the bottle after filling the glasses.

Simon made his announcement.

'I'm afraid', he said, 'that I shall have to go to England at once. I am very sorry, but I have just had a letter——'

'So have I,' said Mrs. Halliday, looking up from one of a bundle of letters brought her by Eugene.

'Oh, mother!' said Betty, who, like Simon, was enjoying her time in Calvi.

'Don't grumble, Betty,' said her mother. 'There never was anything the matter with you, and if there was you're perfectly well now.'

'I should be miserable', said Simon, 'if I thought I was the cause of cutting short your holiday.'

'You're not,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'It's that wretched woman, Thompson.'

Poor Miss Thompson, left in charge of the establishment in Mayfair, had failed. She always knew that she would fail, and said so before Mrs. Halliday left London. Now the full depths of her incompetence was plumbed, and she found a melancholy satisfaction in saying 'I told you so'.

'The duchess', said Mrs. Halliday, 'says that her frock for the Buckingham Palace Garden Party is so tight that it makes her feel like a pork sausage, and that miserable Thompson hasn't the nerve to tell her that it's her own fault for getting fat. If I don't go home at once the whole business will collapse.'

'But', said the prince, 'what will become of me ?

I shall be desolate. There will be no one to listen to my music, no one to whom I can tell the sorrows and sufferings of the Church.'

A wild thought fluttered into Simon's mind. Would it be possible to establish himself as an Anglican chaplain in Calvi, and carry on through the prince negotiations for a formal union with the Russian Church? In that way he might placate his conscience. The tightness of the gaiters round his legs forced on him the conviction that such a thing was impossible. His conscience was no longer his own, a private monitor to be dealt with in his own way. It had become part of the official conscience of a corporate body. His right hand, feeling for his trousers pocket, got entangled in his apron, and reminded him of his position. Besides—he could not deceive himself on such a point—even if his conscience was still his own he could not pacify it by a pretence, however specious.

'The steamer sails to-morrow night', said Mrs. Halliday, 'and we'll go overland from Marseilles.'

Two tears, which had been gathering for some time, overflowed the red rims of the prince's eyes and trickled down his cheeks. He helped himself to another glass of the green liqueur.

Mrs. Halliday banged the knob of the little handbell on the table. Eugene answered the summons at once. His eyes were fixed on the liqueur bottle. He was estimating the number of glasses for which he could fairly charge, and wondering whether he could put them down both in Mrs. Halliday's bill and Simon's. He thought that he could, with perfect safety. The English, a simple people, do not often compare their hotel bills. The book-keeper was an honest man, but

he would not know who drank the liqueurs. Eugene would be a considerable gainer.

'Eugene,' said Mrs. Halliday, in rapid French, 'go to the manager and tell him to book a cabin for me on the steamer to-morrow night. *Cabin de luxe* if he can get it, with two berths.'

'Tell him to get one for me too,' said Simon.

Mrs. Halliday translated.

The prince threw out his hands, palms upward, in a gesture of despair.

'For me', he said, 'it only remains to die.'

'Nonsense,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'It remains for you to compose a farewell symphony.'

The prince cheered up a little at the suggestion. He filled his glass with liqueur again. Eugene made a mental note. Nobody seemed to be paying any attention to what the prince was doing. He would charge two extra glasses in each bill.

'And play it to the next English people who turn up,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Oh, mother,' said Betty, 'can't we have just one more game of submarines?'

'You and the archdeacon can if you like,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I'm not going to pack up a soaking bathing-dress among my clothes, and if I bathe to-morrow morning I shan't be able to get it dry.'

'In G flat,' said the prince. 'Yes, certainly, in G flat. And the motif like this——'

He hummed softly between his pursed lips, waving the fingers of both hands up and down slowly as if beating time.

'Just one moment, Prince,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Eugene, don't go away.'

Eugene was moving off. He may have thought that the orders about the berths in steamers were urgent and that the humming of the prince's farewell symphony might last a long time. Or he may have thought that a scene which was becoming emotional would end in another round of liqueurs. The bottle would be passed more freely if he were not there.

'Tell the manager to telegraph for berths in the *wagonlits* from Marseilles to Calais or Boulogne or wherever that train goes to. For Mademoiselle and me a double cabin, and for Monsieur a single one, if there is such a thing.' She spoke in French to Eugene and then turned to Simon. 'There sometimes is and sometimes isn't.'

She spoke in English to him; but as he had not understood a word of the order she gave to Eugene he was not much helped. All he knew was that there was something somewhere sometimes which at other times is not either there or elsewhere. Fortunately he trusted Mrs. Halliday completely.

'A reverie, I think, not a symphony,' said the prince, 'and in seven-eight time.' Here he slightly altered the pace at which his fingers flapped up and down. 'But certainly in G flat with the resolution of the augmented seventh thus——'

His fingers descended stiffly to the table in front of him, and, leaning far back in his chair, he struck a series of imaginary chords, saying 'Ah, ah, ah!' as he did so.

'But the motif,' he went on, humming again, 'you see. Simplicity. Going thus. That is for Miss Betty, the young lady who thinks of swimming and diving. Perhaps it would be better in common time. I do not

yet know. Or a change into the relative minor. That is my sorrow for Miss Betty's going. And with her the sunshine and the *joie de vivre*. I must try. I must try.'

'Betty,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'go to bed; it's nearly ten o'clock, and if you drink so much as another sip of that green poison you'll have pains all night and be sick in the steamer to-morrow.'

Betty rose at once. She was a well-disciplined and obedient child. Besides she did not want to hear any more of the prince's reverie.

'There must be a suggestion,' he said, 'a reminiscence, a hint, of the triumph march of the English-woman. You have heard it, so——' he hummed again. 'That is for you, Madame.'

The liqueur bottle was unfortunately empty, but the prince managed to get hold of Mrs. Halliday's hand. He kissed it respectfully and a tear or two fell on the back of it.

'I suppose you couldn't work in the duchess feeling like a pork sausage,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'After all, she's the principal part of the motif, or whatever you call it. If it wasn't for her we should be stopping for another week. At least, Betty and I would.'

The prince took no notice of this suggestion. He may have felt that a duchess in a sausage skin is not a suitable subject for a reverie in G flat, and impossible to express in seven-eight time.

'And at last', he went on, 'there should be a phrase from the plainsong of the Dies Irae, just one phrase. That is for the Church, for the archdeacon. Thus it will go.'

'I expect it'll all be perfectly splendid,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Do send us a copy when you've finished it.'

'A memory,' said the prince. 'Another happy memory of an old man whose life has been sad, so sad. Ah yes. When you are all gone—Madame, so kind, so sympathetic, Betty who makes the sun shine, the arch-deacon who brings to my soul the consolations of the Church—when you are all gone I shall sit alone and play my reverie, and remember, remember happy days that come no more. The reverie, it alone remains.'

PART III

LONDON

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LONDON
CHAPTER I

THE trans-Continental express from Marseilles to Calais started on its long journey with a full complement of passengers. A P. & O. boat, arriving that day, disgorged a number of returning Anglo-Indians. Certain tourists found that particular train convenient. They had left England in steamers, taking round tickets, which allowed them to go back overland if they chose. The Bay of Biscay had been unkind on the outward voyage, and there were women, otherwise quite amiable, who snubbed their husbands for choosing a sea-voyage for a holiday and said firmly that whether England was an island or not they were determined to go back to it without going in another steamer. The husbands, unable to dig a channel tunnel in the time at their disposal, did the next best thing and took the train from Marseilles to Calais. There were also, as always happens, a certain number of business men whose chief object was to get back to their London offices as quickly as possible. For them time spent in travelling, however pleasant the journey might be, was time wasted. They had been taught from their youth up that time

is money and they believed it. Indeed, even during a world-wide business slump, time is money, though not exactly in the sense meant by the composer of the saying. During 1931 it was true of most businesses that the more time a man wasted the less money he lost, whereas the diligent man, who saved all possible minutes, lost heavily. In other words the more time a man saved the less profit he made. But it was almost impossible for any business man to realize this. He was working among market conditions of which neither he nor any one else had any experience. He therefore went on trying to save time, and, having been forced to go to the south of France, tried to get home as quickly as possible.

The result of all this was that the train from Marseilles was unusually full. Every sleeping-berth was occupied. This did not matter to Mrs. Halliday, who had her own daughter for her companion, or to Simon, for, thanks to the energy of the hotel manager at Calvi, he had a single-berthed compartment.

The train, a full one to start with and fairly long, was like one of those rivers which gather the waters of tributaries as they flow towards the sea. At every important station on the way three or four additional coaches were hooked on, some full, some partially empty, but all adding to the length of the train and the number of passengers for the steamer at Calais.

This is not a very large steamer, and when it left Calais it looked like a leave-boat in war-time. Our transport officers, able and earnest men, achieved records in the packing of human livestock in those days. The steamer on which Mrs. Halliday and Simon travelled was not quite so full as those more scienti-

fically loaded, but it came very near making a fresh peace-time record. Seats for most people were quite unobtainable and a man counted himself lucky if he had a piece of gunwale rail to lean against. Fortunately the sea was calm and only the most inveterate sea-sickers were forced to make themselves odious to their fellow-passengers.

The condition of this ship illustrates a curious law which governs the lives of English people, though it operates nowhere else in the world. The poorer the English are the more money the tax-collector takes from them, the lower their dividends and profits fall, the more they travel at home and abroad. The number of unemployed rises to millions and their doles are cut down, but more and more chars-à-banc full of pleasure travellers crowd the roads. Bankruptcy succeeds bankruptcy and even debenture bondholders are no longer sure of their interest, but cruising ships multiply and cross-channel steamers are crowded. The Americans when hit by a storm of depression stay at home. So do the Germans, and the French who do not travel much in prosperous days will not stir at all in times of adversity. The English—Ajax defying the lightning of the gods—travel more than before.

A custom-house, even under the most favourable conditions, is a scene of hustle and confusion. For some reason it seems to be impossible to arrange the examination of passengers' luggage in an orderly and seemly manner. The fault does not lie with the customs officers, who keep their heads and remain cool, except in so far as their calm detachment exasperates their victims and goads them into paroxysms

of hustling. Nor can the steamboat companies be blamed. It is their business to get rid of their passengers and luggage as quickly as possible. This they do, urging across the gangway those who think that the way of true wisdom is to wait on board until the crowd in the custom-house grows thinner.

Since we have discovered that the way to prosperity lies in the stopping of imports the custom-house riots have become worse than they were. Only the very energetic, the pushful and the dominant can hope to get through without long delay and some physical suffering. The weak, the timid and the self-effacing, have to endure longer delays and many bruises.

When the steamer sidled up to the pier, Mrs. Halliday, Betty and Simon stood together on the deck, their suit-cases ranged in front of them like the hastily made defences of soldiers who pause in the course of an advance. Thanks to Mrs. Halliday's skill and foresight they had secured a place exactly opposite the spot at which the end of the gangway would rest on the deck. They had every chance, thanks again to Mrs. Halliday, of being the very first passengers to land.

'Keep close behind me, Archdeacon,' she said, 'and don't let people shove you out of your place. They will if you are not firm and the women are the most dangerous. Do remember that this is no time for giving way to the weaker sex, chivalry or anything of that sort. We have the best places in the whole ship and what we've got to do is to stick to them till our feet are on the gangway.'

Her foresight was justified and the plan worked for her and Betty. A particularly energetic porter, spotted by Mrs. Halliday and engaged with a nod

before the steamer touched the pier, took charge of their suit-cases. By a gentle use of her elbows and a smile which disarmed protest she was the very first who stepped ashore and Betty was the second. Their porter, a man who will certainly rise in his profession, took a way of his own off the ship and had their cases arranged in front of the examining officer before they passed the policeman at the entrance to the customs-shed. The whole business, so far as they were concerned, was over in ten minutes. Mrs. Halliday declared with the confidence of a perfectly honest woman, that she had nothing to declare. The officer, such are the rigours of our customs now, demanded the opening of two of the suit-cases. He rummaged a little among Betty's nightdresses and stockings in the first case. The contents of the second might have surprised any one except a custom-house officer, who is immune from amazement, but there was nothing dutiable in it. Mrs. Halliday read through with deep attention the list of goods printed on a large card which was handed to her, declared again that she had neither a watch, a microscope, a bottle of liqueur or . . . The officer scribbled chalk marks on the suit-cases. The porter shouldered them again and Mrs. Halliday secured the most desirable seats in the waiting train.

Simon's fate was very different. In the first place he failed to secure a porter. The man he had signalled to discovered some one else who looked good for a bigger tip, and callously deserted Simon. Then he found himself quite unable to follow Mrs. Halliday's excellent advice. Almost immediately after she left him he lost his place at the end of the gangway, and

lost it, as she had foreseen, to a woman. A lady, who had not even the excuse of being good-looking, sidled in front of him. A man, who had at least the grace to say 'Excuse me' pushed Simon to one side. Two women dug their elbows into his chest and drove him back. They said that they wanted to catch the train, but that was equally true of Simon and almost every one else on the steamer. Other people, both men and women, recognized that he was not the kind of man who fights for himself or stands up for his rights. They drove him farther and farther back across the deck until it was plain that he would be one of the last to leave the ship. In the end he found himself in the company of a man on crutches and an invalid lady supported by a nurse.

His luck was no better when he got to the customs-shed. There was a party of young men whose luggage had established itself under the letter Y, although all their names began with B. They rushed about and several times nearly knocked Simon down. There were six different women who had lost their keys, and six more whose keys, though they had worked well at the beginning of the journey now, refused to fit into the locks to which they were supposed to belong. There was a harassed man who appealed to Simon for help. The custom-house officer demanded the opening of his wife's cabin trunk. The lady, who had been seasick all the way across, declared with tears that her trunk was not locked, and then when forced to admit that it was, said emphatically that the keys were inside it. Her husband, driven to desperation, asked Simon for help and advice. He asked in vain. Neither Simon nor perhaps any one else in the world

could have found a way out of that difficulty. Even the examining officer was baffled. He remained calm and courteous but insisted that the lost keys could not be inside the locked trunk. The lady, neither calmly nor courteously, insisted that they were. She was sure of this because she had put them there herself, inside her trinket box, which was packed in the upper tray next the sponge bag.

The name of this couple began with a J and Simon detached himself from them as soon as he discovered that he would have to present himself under the letter C. He was the very last C and the officer who waited for him was a little tired when Simon hoisted his two suit-cases on to the trestle-table.

The English custom-house officer is of all men on earth the best judge of faces. He can tell by a glance whether the man who presents a suit-case is honest, dishonest, or one of those borderline people who would not pocket the property of an unwary shopkeeper or even cheat a railway company, but does not think it wrong to avoid paying duty on a couple of hundred cigars. The officer, a young but intelligent man called Thom, saw at once that Simon belonged to the first class and was one of those whose words may be taken without hesitation when they say that they have nothing to declare.

These people, who not only are honest but look honest, are fortunate. There are others equally honest who perhaps through some irregularity of their eyes, perhaps because of a nose temporarily swollen by a mosquito bite, perhaps through mere nervousness, do not impress their true character on the customs officer. They have to open a bag or two, though their clothes

are not severely handled. The others, the honest who look honest, are allowed to pass without any opening of luggage. Their mere word in answer to a formal question is enough for an experienced officer. Simon was one of these.

‘Anything to declare, sir?’ said Thom politely.

He was always polite, even at the end of a hard tussle with a crowd of passengers. He was particularly polite to Simon when he saw his clerical collar and archidiaconal gaiters.

‘Nothing whatever,’ said Simon.

Thom believed him. Almost any one would believe what Simon said. But Thom believed even more readily than most people. In private life, that is to say on Sundays, Thom sang in a church choir and had lately been promoted, owing to his piety, to the position of cross-bearer whenever there was a procession. This brought him into close connection with the local clergy and like every one else who even gets as far as having tea with the curate, he had the utmost respect for the priests of the Church of England. It did not seem possible that Simon could be telling a direct lie when he said that he had nothing to declare.

And Thom saw, by the gaiters, that Simon was not only a priest, he was something more, perhaps a bishop. Thom had twice come into contact with bishops, both of them colonial, and he knew how to address them.

‘Thank you, my lord,’ he said.

Unfortunately at that moment a senior officer, one Morton, passed along behind the trestle-table. He was known to be a man of stern integrity, who believed in the rigorous performance of duty and was inclined to be severe on those who were lax. Simon’s friendly

Thom caught sight of him out of the corners of his eyes. With Morton's eye on him it would not be wise to pass Simon's suit-cases without at least some pretence of examination.

'I beg your pardon, my lord,' he said to Simon, 'but I am afraid I must trouble you to open one of your cases—this one.'

Simon, whose conscience was like the noonday clear, had not the slightest objection to opening either or both of his cases. He fished his keys out of his pocket and chose from among them the one which was sister to that which he had given to Mrs. Halliday at Calvi, which had so conveniently fitted her suit-case, the suit-case which was to all appearance identical with his own. He turned the key in the lock.

Thom, with the reverent courtesy due to a bishop, raised the lid. On top, neatly folded, lying quite flat, were two pairs of the yellow calico trousers worn by the Corsican fishermen at Calvi. Simon was a little surprised. He did not know that he possessed such garments and had no recollection of packing them. Thom must have been equally surprised, but he showed no sign of his feeling. Yellow trousers are not dutiable, and though he would not have expected a bishop to own such garments, they were no business of his.

He was about to close the lid again when Morton stepped forward and lifted out the two pairs of trousers. Morton, as it happened, was an ardent member of the British Association of Scientific Secularists and therefore had a great dislike of all clergy, whom he regarded as obscurantists and the enemies of human progress. He did not actually suspect Simon of smuggling, but he was glad of a chance of being unpleasant to a priest.

Under the trousers, covering the whole of the rest of the contents of the case, was a sheet of fine tissue paper, quite unruffled except where it was tucked in at the sides and ends. Morton raised this paper and uncovered something brilliantly coloured and unquestionably made of silk. Thom was less surprised than he had been by the trousers. It seemed plain that Morton had come on an episcopal vestment of some sort, carefully packed by some reverent sacristan. It was not in the least like anything which either of the two bishops he knew had worn, and being a man with a taste for ceremonial clothes he had observed those bishops closely. But he remained entirely unsuspicious. In these days, as we all know, and Thom knew better than most of us, the Church is awakening to the value of splendour in worship and her ancient taste for gorgeous garments is reviving in her. No one can tell for certain what a bishop, or even a simple priest, will wear on any occasion. The Aaronic Habergown with its trimming of pomegranates, may appear any day in one of our churches. Thom's impulse was to cover the thing up again reverently with the sheet of tissue paper.

Morton thought otherwise. He laid profane hands—they seemed profane to Thom—on the vestment, pulled it out, held it up and displayed the trousers part of a particularly brilliant suit of ladies' pyjamas.

Thom looked at Simon, at the face which a few moments before had seemed that of a completely honest man. It was utterly changed. Wise as he was in reading the human face, Thom was puzzled. Was this the terrified expression of conscious guilt, discovered guilt, the panic of a caught criminal, which

he saw? He could not tell. All he was sure of was that it was not the expression of the face of a dignified and innocent bishop.

'There's been a bit too much of this sort of thing lately,' said Morton. 'You come along with me, my man.'

'My man!' And that to a bishop! Thom shuddered. He had long known that Morton was a Secularist, which he understood to be some obscure kind of dissenter, but this total want of respect, this deliberate insult, this profanity, was unbearable even in the mouth of a professed atheist. Unless—— A horrible suspicion invaded Thom's mind, unless this smuggler who had so nearly succeeded in importing a suit of silk pyjamas—unless he were not really a bishop. Wolves before now have put on sheep's skins. If Simon had indeed dressed himself in a bishop's clothes with the object of defrauding the revenue, why then 'my man' was too good for him.

But Thom could not quite believe that. The expression of Simon's face which he had seen first, unmistakably the face of an honest man, remained in his memory.

CHAPTER II

FOR a minute Simon was almost as much surprised as Thom. Yellow fishermen's trousers were amazing enough. A set of ladies' pyjamas was the very last thing he expected to see taken out of his suit-case. It looked like some malignant conjuring trick. Then he suddenly realized what had happened. Mrs. Halliday owned a suit-case exactly like his. The same key opened both. She had, as he knew, bought a quantity of clothes, pyjamas and other garments, from the Princess Matinski's mannequin in Calvi. The suit-cases must have been mixed up during the time of confusion on the steamer's deck. Her porter had gone off with his case. He had been left with hers.

No doubt she was now in trouble and difficulty somewhere, looking for her own case with its precious contents, trying to make a declaration to the custom-house officer and to pay duty on what she was bringing into England, unable to do so because she could not display what she said she had. He would find her somewhere, perhaps in the office to which Morton was leading him. Then the mistake would be explained and everything set right without difficulty.

He followed Morton along the whole length of the customs shed, Thom, carrying the two cases, followed him. They reached a small office with a dingy glass-panelled door. Into it Simon was ushered as if he

were a prisoner, but still without any feeling of uneasiness. In the middle of the little office was a table with several large ledgers spread open upon it. Morton sat down behind the table, leaving Simon to stand.

Mrs. Halliday was not there. She must, so Simon thought, be making her declaration somewhere else, or perhaps she had made it, and all the silk garments were already registered in the book on the table.

'Now then,' said Morton, 'what about it?'

A doubt, a serious doubt, stirred Simon. It suddenly occurred to him that Mrs. Halliday had not declared the garments, had even intended to smuggle them in. If so the situation was very awkward indeed.

'Let's see what else he has,' said Morton.

The two suit-cases were laid on the table. Thom unpacked the first. Garment after garment was taken out and shaken free of its coverings and linings of tissue paper. One after another the pyjama suits were displayed. One after another appeared dainty evening gowns, masterpieces of Matinski's art. The number of silken garments, of modern fashion, which can be packed into a suit-case of moderate size, surprised Simon. It also surprised Morton.

'Well, I'm damned!' he said.

'If it had been microscopes now, or cameras,' said Thom sadly.

No doubt the disgrace to the Church, which Thom felt acutely, would have been less if the smuggled goods had been scientific or artistic instruments.

A poor priest, devoted to research or art, might be tempted to smuggle the instruments he wanted. Being tempted he might fall. He would act wrongly, but not disgracefully. There would be excuses to be made,

an explanation which would bring no shame with it. But this case full of women's clothes——

'Anything to say for yourself?' said Morton.

'Were the goods not declared?' said Simon feebly.

He still clung to a slender hope that Mrs. Halliday had made a full declaration.

'Ho! Declared, were they? So that's the line, is it? What about it, Thom? Did he declare anything?'

'I asked him the usual questions,' said Thom, 'and he said he had nothing to declare.'

'So that's that,' said Morton. 'Well, it's a police business now.'

It was thus that Simon found himself face to face with a dilemma. It was still possible for him to say that the suit-case was not his, that he had picked it up on the deck of the steamer by mistake, that he knew nothing of its contents. That story might be believed. It would, he felt sure, be investigated. What would happen if an investigation was made? There lay the offending garments, the property of some one, and of some one who meant to smuggle them. It was quite plain that Mrs. Halliday had made no declaration. An inquiry which set him free from blame would incriminate her. The affair was serious. The authorities would certainly not let it drop. In the end the case and the garments would be traced to Mrs. Halliday.

All this Simon saw quite clearly and saw at once. Long residence in Badakak has certain disadvantages. It makes a man shy of civilization and timid in the presence of civilized people, but it does teach him to think quickly in emergencies. A Badakakian faced, for instance, by a hungry and unexpected anaconda

must think quickly or else he will not survive long enough to think at all.

'I assure you', said Simon, 'that there has been a mistake. That case——'

There he stopped abruptly. He had made his decision, made it as rapidly and finally as he had made dozens of other vital decision, in Badakak. It was an absurd decision. It was quixotic. It was from the point of view of any sensible man a wrong decision, but, thanks to the training of years of patient self-sacrifice, it was the only decision possible for Simon. A medieval knight, the kind which went seeking for the Holy Grail, steeped in the ridiculous creed of chivalry, might have made such a decision. Of modern men perhaps only one of the 'pukka sahib' class possessed by fantastic ideas about woman's honour would even have understood it. Simon made it then and there, without hesitation.

He would make no attempt to clear himself, offer no explanation, say no word, which might by any chance lead to the incrimination of Mrs. Halliday. He foresaw the consequences clearly enough, police-court proceedings, imprisonment perhaps, disgrace certainly, in the end complete ruin. He preferred all that to sacrificing a woman who had been kind to him, whom he reckoned to be his friend.

'You can explain the mistake to the magistrate in court,' said Morton. 'Open the other case, Thom, and let's see what's in it. Here, you,' this was to Simon again, 'hand over your keys.'

If he expected to find stockings and nightdresses in the second case, he was disappointed. Simon's dressing-gown was dragged out, a shabby garment to

which no custom-house in Europe would object, which even on the quays in New York would have passed unrebuked. Then came the old flannel trousers and the stained alpaca jacket. Then, tightly and untidily packed, just such things as a travelling clergyman might be expected to have, socks, shirts, collars, a pair of shoes, razors, a sponge.

'Ha!' said Morton, 'it's this case that he meant us to open.'

Simon's Greek Testament was taken from the bottom of the case and then the MS. of his translation of St. Matthew's Gospel into Badakakian.

'If you don't mind,' said Simon, 'I wish you'd give back the papers and the book to me. They're not contraband.'

'They look to me uncommonly like a cipher,' said Morton, who was disappointed at the contents of the second case, and therefore short-tempered. 'He might have a confederate.'

Morton, as befits an advanced secularist and an advocate of progressive thought, was by no means an illiterate man. But he was one of those who do their reading, as many men do their religion, at second hand, through a deputy or accredited representative. His wife borrowed a book once a week from a Free Library. She preferred simple love stories in which countesses appeared, but now and then she got by mistake a different kind of book. Once she had brought home a highly spiced and quite undocumented history of the Secret Service during the war. She did not read it, but her husband, who was laid up with a cold that week, did. It was the only actual book he ever had read, for the leaflets of the secularist

society cannot be counted as books in any proper sense. Like most men who only read one book he was greatly impressed by it, far more than those who read a great deal ever are. He was perfectly convinced that spies, and smugglers, always corresponded in cipher and carried about with them sheets and sheets of cryptograms.

Thom, who had not read the spy book, was not so sure about the cipher.

'What's all this?' he said to Simon.

Simon felt that no possible harm to Mrs. Halliday could come through his giving this information.

'The book', he said, 'is a Greek Testament. Look at the title-page if you don't believe me.'

Thom, after a glance at it, handed the book to Morton. Morton stared at it frowning.

'*Novum Testamentum Graece*,' he spelt out slowly. 'Oxonii E. Typographeo. . . .'

That was a nasty word and the next looked even worse. 'Clarendoniano' was too much even for a man who once won a County Council Scholarship into a secondary school and had since kept up his reading with a spy book. But 'Testamentum' reassured him slightly. It looked as if it might mean Testament; and Simon had said that the book was a Greek Testament.

'And what's this?' he said, looking at the MS.

'That', said Simon, 'is the beginning of my translation of the New Testament into Badakakian.'

'Into how much?' said Morton, impressed in spite of himself.

'Badakakian,' said Simon, 'that's the language of the country where I was a missionary.'

'Looks to me more like code writing,' said Morton, but he was feeling less confident than before.

'If he's a missionary,' said Thom, 'which is what he says, it doesn't somehow seem as if he could have been smuggling those dresses and things, not in the ordinary way. They might be meant for some kind of show, mightn't they?'

He had once been at a Missionary Exhibition, and remembered the display of garments worn by the heathen. They were, according to English ideas, insufficient, but scarcely more so than the pyjamas and evening dresses which lay on the table.

'You keep your damned tongue quiet,' said Morton.

This business which looked simple enough at first was beginning to bother him slightly. There were a great many sheets of Simon's MS. and ciphers seldom run to more than a page or two of note-paper. Then there was the book. 'Testamentum' must mean Testament, and that suggested the Bible. The ordinary smuggler does not carry Bibles, or even parts of the Bible about with him. Then there were Simon's clothes. The apron and gaiters might be a disguise; but, seen along with Simon's face, they had a genuine look about them.

Morton was anxious to do his duty and to acquire merit by doing it thoroughly. But he knew that there is such a thing as excessive zeal, and that it sometimes leads a man into a position in which he looks like a fool.

'Will you give me your name and address?' he said, not very uncivilly.

'Simon Craven, Archdeacon of Badakak.'

'Archdeacon of What?'

'Badakak,' said Simon.

'Never heard of it,' said Morton; 'have you, Thom?'

Thom, though he had listened to a good many missionary sermons and lectures, had never heard of Badakak.

'What is it in English?' said Morton.

There is no English for Badakak at present. Some day perhaps there will be. Just as there is English for Firenze, for Wien, for Varsova and other names.

'It's the same in English,' said Simon.

'Spell it then,' said Morton.

'B, A, D,' said Simon, 'with a circumflex accent over the A. But you can leave that out if you like. The English maps generally do.'

'English maps are good enough for me,' said Morton. 'Go on.'

'A, K,' said Simon, 'with a cedilla under the K.'

'Here,' said Morton, 'what do you think you're doing? Spelling it in Persian or what?'

'The cedilla is necessary,' said Simon, 'it alters the sound of the K. I always use it in transliterating the name.'

'What's the rest of it?' said Morton.

'A, K,' said Simon. 'No cedilla under the second K.'

'Is that your address,' said Morton, 'or is it part of your name?'

'If you want an English address——' said Simon.

Then he remembered that he had not got an English address. His plan was to call at the office of the Church of England Evangelistic Corporation when he reached London, and ask Mr. Allworthy for the name of a suitable hotel.

'It's your English address I'm asking for,' said Morton.

'At the moment', said Simon, 'I haven't got an English address.'

Morton's worst suspicions revived again. A man without an English address is almost certainly a malefactor. It is very difficult to conceive of any one without an English address unless he is a fugitive from justice, and even then he probably has one but wishes to conceal it.

'But if you want to write to me,' said Simon, 'a letter to the office of the C.E.E.C. will find me.'

'C.E. what?' said Morton.

'E.C.,' said Simon. 'C.E.E.C.'

Here Thom, though bidden to keep his tongue quiet, spoke again. He knew what the C.E.E.C. is, because he had at one time acted as parochial treasurer for missions, and forwarded the subscriptions of the faithful to the office in London.

'It's a missionary society,' he said. 'The Archbishop of Canterbury is a President. So's the King.'

He was not sure about the King; but his confidence in Simon's integrity was increasing every moment, in spite of the fact that appearances were greatly against him. He put in the King in hopes of impressing Morton, who might not take much notice of the Archbishop. It was a good plan. Morton felt that there was every need for caution and was not so ready as he had been to hand Simon over to the police.

'What about my ringing these missionary people up?' he said. 'Have you any objection to that?'

'None,' said Simon. 'I wish you would.'

'Here, Thom,' said Morton, 'get them for me if they're on the phone.'

Thom got through almost at once and handed the receiver to Morton.

'This is the Inland Revenue speaking,' said Morton, 'H.M. Inspector of Customs.'

It was a girl who answered him, apparently a timid girl. This was Miss Simpson who acted as clerk and received telephone messages in the office of the C.E.E.C. She suggested that she should go and call Mr. Allworthy, the secretary.

'Hold on,' said Morton. 'If you're going to call your boss, you may as well tell him that I've got a missionary bug here. Yes, I said bug. B, U, G, bug. Caught smuggling silk pyjamas. He says he's an archbishop——'

'Archdeacon,' said Simon. 'I'm not an archbishop and never expect to be.'

'Come from a place called——' Morton went on, 'called—— Here, hold on a minute. I have it written down. Bad-a-kak. Ever hear of it? . . . Oh, you have. There is such a place then. Would there be an archbishop there? Or an archdeacon?' Then, as Miss Simpson, bewildered and a little frightened, hesitated to answer he went on, 'Tell your boss I want to know.'

CHAPTER III

MRS. HALLIDAY felt that she was to some extent responsible for Simon, and she was not a selfish woman. A man so helpless and innocent requires a woman to look after him, and Mrs. Halliday, after leaving Calvi, had mothered him, and rather enjoyed it. She secured not only two, but three good seats in the train. The third was for Simon. Other passengers, escaping in small parties from the customs shed, looked for seats and inquired whether Simon's was engaged. Still more passengers came, passengers for whom there were no seats anywhere, for our English railways, worried by the unfair competition of motor-buses, like to take their revenge upon those who must travel in trains by crowding them into carriages which plainly will not hold them. Some of these latest travellers made determined efforts to take Simon's seat. Mrs. Halliday drove them off, but it became more and more difficult to do so.

At last she became anxious. She tried to reassure herself. Simon was timid and helpless, but he surely must get through the custom house in the end. The man on crutches and the lady with the nurse arrived. Even the man whose wife had succeeded in locking up her keys in her trunk appeared. But there was no sign of Simon.

'Betty,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'go and see if he's

coming. Run down as far as the end of the platform. I'll keep the seats.'

A guard and the ticket collector marched down the platform, herding protesting passengers into compartments where there was no room for them. Betty came back without any news of Simon and was bundled into her place.

'Guard,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'don't start the train yet. There's a gentleman coming.'

'We're late already,' said the guard.

'You'll have to be later then,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I won't have this gentleman left behind. He's most important. An archdeacon. There'll be a row if you start without him. I'll complain to the directors. I'll have a question asked in Parliament. I'll write a letter to *The Times*.'

The guard was impressed, as all Englishmen are, by the mention of *The Times*. Against directors a man can hold his own, if he has his union behind him. Parliament is a negligible power. Nobody minds it. But *The Times* is another thing altogether, and the guard knew it. He moved off and consulted the stationmaster, an official with a very splendid hat. He came back grinning, though the grin faded when he was face to face with Mrs. Halliday. In her mood, of irritation and anxiety, Mrs. Halliday was not a safe woman to grin at.

'There's a gent detained by the customs,' he said. 'A clerical gent. So the stationmaster told me. It wouldn't be no use waiting for him.'

He put his whistle to his lips and blew it sharply. The train moved forward, gathering speed. The guard swung himself through the door of his passing van.

He was grinning again. He had a joke which would keep him amused all the way to London. Humour, they say, consists in the unexpected union of incongruous ideas. If this is so, the guard was entirely justified in enjoying his joke. The station-master had the facts very nearly right.

'Bishop caught smuggling girls' pyjamas,' he said. 'Hot stuff some of those bishops.'

Bishops and girls' pyjamas! Could a greater incongruity be conceived? The joke deserved all the guard's grins.

Mrs. Halliday flung herself back in her seat.

Betty had taken advantage of the run down the platform to buy a packet of nut milk chocolate. It was a kind she knew and loved, made in Bournville, issued to the public in bright red cartons. In Calvi chocolate of any sort is difficult to get, and good English nut milk slabs, thick and satisfying, are not to be had at all. Betty craved for what had once been an accustomed food, but she was a generous child. Though she could, easily and with pleasure, have eaten the whole slab herself, she broke off a bit and offered it to her mother.

She was immediately snubbed. Mrs. Halliday liked milk chocolate well enough, but she was in no mood for eating it then.

She was thinking bitter thoughts about custom-house officers, bitterer thoughts about fate which had played her an incredibly base trick, and bitterest thoughts of all about herself, for being an unpardonable fool. For a fool she was, and saw plainly enough that before her folly was purged she would undergo the treatment prescribed for fools by Solomon—be brayed in a mortar in a pestle along with the wheat.

And yet—— Oh, yes, she had been a fool right enough. But yet—— Any one would have thought—— Mrs. Halliday knew English custom-house officers and their ways very well. She would have betted, indeed in a certain sense she had betted, that Simon's suit-cases would have gone through unexamined, or if opened at all, with only a casual glance at their contents. Never was a man so unmistakably honest of face, never a man with a more innocently unsuspecting manner, and then his clothes—— Surely there must be, even in these godless days, some respect left for the clergy. She had seen men less innocent-looking than Simon, less obtrusively clerical, walk through a custom-house without the opening of a bag, having received the chalk mark of emancipation in return for a simple spoken negative. The leaving of that suit-case full of Matinski's model garments in Simon's hands had seemed as safe as anything could be.

And she had made security more sure. If by any evil chance—it was a hundred to one against such a chance—but if it did happen that the case was opened, there were two perfectly harmless pairs of yellow trousers ready for inspection. She had bought them in Calvi and packed them into the case with the greatest care. Not a fragment of tissue paper was visible to hint at anything but more yellow trousers underneath. Surely no customs officer, dealing with a man like Simon, knowing that he was an archdeacon, would want to go beyond the yellow trousers.

'Damned bad luck.'

Mrs. Halliday, for the satisfaction of her soul, said the words aloud. Betty, munching nut milk chocolate,

heard them and wondered, quite unsympathetically. With a mouthful of nut milk chocolate, the kind made at Bournville, it is impossible to believe that there is such a thing as damned bad luck.

The exclamation relieved Mrs. Halliday's feelings, but it did not help towards the solution of the problem which faced her.

If Simon's suit-case, by which she meant her own suit-case, had been opened and unpacked—— She put the thought resolutely from her mind. Such a thing could not have happened. She was worrying herself unnecessarily. Simon had missed the train. That was all. He was a very helpless and inefficient man. No one knew that better than she did. If there was a wrong platform to go to, Simon would inevitably go to it. If there were a wrong train to get into he would get into it. That was no doubt what had happened and there was no reason for anxiety. She determined to believe that that had happened. She did believe it. She would, at all events, act as if she believed it, and then in due time belief would come.

'Betty,' she said, 'I think I'll have a bit of that chocolate after all.'

Betty broke off two small cubes, tore away the silver paper round them and handed them to her mother. Mrs. Halliday put them into her mouth and nearly choked. It was not that she tried to swallow the chocolate whole. The choke came, not from the mouth end of her throat, but from somewhere near her diaphragm. It was a spasm of extreme anxiety.

She remembered what the guard said just before the train started. 'A gent detained by the customs. A clerical gent.'

That settled it. Not even the most vigorous self-hypnotism, not the Coué treatment however conscientiously endured, not whole pounds of nut milk chocolate chewed into the smoothest syrup, could induce belief in face of the station-master's words.

Mrs. Halliday was sufficiently a woman of the world to guess pretty well what the penalties for such an attempt at smuggling would be. A crippling fine, police court proceedings, newspaper publicity, and for Simon disgrace and professional ruin. A dreadful word came into her mind: 'unfrocked'. She had only a vague idea of what it meant, but it was something desperately unpleasant, irretrievably disgraceful which is done to criminal or very immoral priests. Would Simon be unfrocked?

Not once, even while envisaging these awful consequences did it occur to her that Simon would save himself quite easily by saying that the suit-case was hers, not his. He could do that and in the end prove the truth of what he said to the satisfaction of any magistrate. It was what any other man would do, but Mrs. Halliday was perfectly certain that Simon would not. That was what made her own problem acute.

She pulled herself together, a physical action with a certain influence on her mind. She squared her shoulders, shut her lips tight, and clenched her hands. There was no problem at all. She could not possibly allow Simon to suffer in her place. She must come forward, in the police court or elsewhere, and make his complete innocence clear to all the world. Her decision was made and she would not go back on it.

But she could and did think of what the conse-

quences would be. The 'unfrocking' part of them did not apply to her. The most vindictive customer would not take her frock off her in public court, even if it were a smuggled one. Nor would she have minded very much if he had. That would be a light, quite inconsiderable part of the penalty. The fine was another matter. That in her case would be very severe, all the severer, she felt, because of the unusual way in which her smuggling was done. She was a little uncertain about the law but feared that she would not get off with a fine. She had been guilty not only of smuggling but of getting her smuggling done for her by an innocent man, unconscious of what he was doing. A magistrate with a high sense of justice, which all magistrates have, and a deep detestation of meanness in criminals, which is a sentiment professed by all judges, might be particularly severe on her on account of the trick she had played on Simon. She could almost hear the ponderous admonition of the judicial voice. 'You have been guilty not only of an offence against the laws of your country but of an attempt, a singularly base and contemptible attempt, to fasten your guilt on an innocent and helpless man. Women like you are a danger to society. No man, no honest man, is safe while you, and those like you, are at large in our midst. I shall therefore . . .' Then there would be talk about a maximum penalty, and she would be led off by a wardress to endure a term of imprisonment.

Mrs. Halliday shuddered.

But even a term of imprisonment would not complete the punishment. There was the consequent disgrace, involving the ruin of her business. Would

any duchess deal with Jane Green for her dresses when Mrs. Halliday was in prison? Would the wife of the Bishop of Barminster order the presentation dress of her next daughter from a Jane Green convicted of mean and abominable crime? And if she was in prison and the business ruined, what would happen to Betty? What would happen to Elizabeth Code's money, invested, hitherto so profitably, in Jane Green?

Unfrocking apart, the consequences would be almost worse for her than for Simon. Yet she did not hesitate or try to wriggle out of her decision. At the last resort Simon must be cleared.

But there was just a crumb of comfort in the words 'at the last resort'. Things had not got to that yet. Something might happen before the dreadful confession was forced from her. She tried to think of anything that might happen, but she tried in vain. Still, things did happen, unexpected, unimaginable things, sometimes. She could at least wait a while and see if anything did.

This is the philosophy of the world's Micawbers, of the feeble, of the cowardly, of those who shrink from facing life, or death, or whatever lies inevitably before them. Something may happen, even at the last moment, something.

Mrs. Halliday, though she ventured to cling to the possibility of a happening, was not such a fool or a coward as to sit down and wait for it. She would, if she could, find out what was happening, and what was likely to go on happening. With this knowledge she might find it possible to influence the course of events, to make something happen. The Micawbers of the

world never do this. Mrs. Halliday was not one of them.

She took up her bag and from it a slip of paper on which Simon had written down an English address for her.

'You will always be able to get at me', he said, 'through the C.E.E.C. They will know where I am.'

And he had written down the address of that venerable society.

CHAPTER IV

THE train drew into the London terminus. There was much struggling for bags and suit-cases. There were heads stretched out of windows to secure porters by words and beckonings. There were efforts to get to doors, scramblings, trippings.

Mrs. Halliday, in spite of her mental disturbance, was as competent as ever. She secured a porter, secured a taxi, gathered her belongings together and bade Betty follow her. Betty stuffed the last five cubes of nut milk chocolate into her pocket and crossed the crowded platform close behind her mother.

She and the suit-cases were pushed into a taxi. She was given money to pay the driver and told to go straight home.

'But mother——' she said.

Mrs. Halliday had shut the door of the taxi without getting in. She gave the address to the driver.

'But what are you going to do, mother?' said Betty. 'You're not going straight to the shop, are you? Need you?'

Betty got no answer. Her driver slipped in his clutch and began a difficult and complex turning movement. Mrs. Halliday spoke to her porter.

'Get me another taxi, please.'

This was not an easy business, but the man accom-

plished it in the end. Mrs. Halliday gave this driver the address of the C.E.E.C.

The office of a society like the C.E.E.C. must be regarded as half sacred, not quite a church but very nearly. Robust colonial bishops have been known to light their pipes in the outer hall, but no clergy from a home diocese and no missionary of less than episcopal status would put a match to a cigarette until he was outside the door. There is a sense of sanctity about the place, mixed, an odd mixture, with a sense of business. The stranger, breathing the air for the first time, sniffs dubiously. He has, in his time, entered cathedrals and knows the smell of them. He has also more than once, in search perhaps of a loan or an overdraft, passed into the inner chambers of a bank. He knows that smell. But the two, the smell of religion and the smell of finance, combine in a puzzling way. The most experienced man scarcely knows what to think of the mixture.

In the C.E.E.C. building the combination is complete, and to those accustomed to it, to the Rev. Kenilworth Allworthy, for instance, it is not unpleasant. Here large sums of money are handled, securities bought and sold, the fluctuations of the markets watched, but all with the most unsecular purpose, the evangelizing of the heathen world.

But, though peculiar, indeed in many ways unique, the C.E.E.C. office has one feature which links it in kinship with all other great offices in the world. It has doors labelled 'Private' in clear letters. It has one door near the entrance, a door with a glass shutter in it, marked 'Inquiries'. It was on this glass panel that Mrs. Halliday knocked, and knocked imperatively.

The shutter was opened almost immediately, and

Mrs. Halliday saw a girl, a colourless girl with mild blue eyes and pale hair, a girl who was plainly very gentle and meek, who looked as if she would be easily frightened and often was frightened. This was Miss Simpson who, a little earlier, had received Morton's telephone message. Behind her was a table with a typewriter on it. Round the walls of the room were shelves crammed with the well-known buff-coloured reports of the Corporation. Here were the records of a hundred years of work, of spending, of generosity, of self-sacrifice, all devoted to enlarging the borders of the Church and casting wider the evangelistic net.

Mrs. Halliday realized at a glance that it was not this girl she had come to see, or this office she had come to visit. Yet, if she had known it, this girl could have given her at least part of the information she wanted. It was she who had heard Morton announce that he had caught 'a missionary bug' in the act of smuggling.

'I want to see your chief,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Mr. Allworthy?' said Miss Simpson; 'but I'm afraid he's engaged.'

'I want to see him whether he's engaged or not,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'But the Bishop of Barminster is with him.'

'Then I'll see the bishop too.'

The girl's pale eyes opened very wide indeed. No one she had ever met before had ventured to suggest interrupting Mr. Allworthy when in conference with a bishop.

'Couldn't you leave a message?' said Miss Simpson timidly.

'No I couldn't,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'And I can't make an appointment either, and I can't wait. My business is very important.'

No business can possibly be more important than a conference between a bishop and a secretary of a missionary society. Miss Simpson knew that, but she was beginning to feel a little afraid of Mrs. Halliday, so she did not say so.

'That's a house 'phone on your desk, isn't it?' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Just ring up the secretary and say that I want to see him on very important business. My name's Halliday. But you can say Jane Green, if you like.'

That, so it seemed to Mrs. Halliday, ought to settle the matter. There could not be an adult female in London who did not know the splendour and importance of Jane Green. There are women who do not go to her for their clothes, but there are none who would not if they could afford the Jane Green prices. Oddly enough, this girl seemed totally unimpressed. She did not seem even to recognize the great name. A glance at her frock explained this strange thing to Mrs. Halliday. Apparently neither Miss Simpson herself nor anyone else took the slightest interest in what she wore.

'Tell him', said Mrs. Halliday, 'that I want to speak to him about the Archdeacon of Badakak, b, a, d, a, k, a, k. Ever heard of him?'

'I have,' said Miss Simpson. 'Of course I have.'

There is probably not a single archdeaconry in any part of the Church Overseas of which Miss Simpson had not heard. She was a very good girl and took a real interest in her work as inquiry clerk in the office of the

C.E.E.C. In her leisure hours, which were not many, for the office was under-staffed, she read the reports which filled the shelves around her. If asked suddenly, the day before, whether she had ever heard of Badakak she would have said promptly and quite truthfully that she had. That day when Mrs. Halliday asked the question Badakak was specially fresh in her mind. Indeed, for an hour or more she had been thinking of little except Badakak and its archdeacon.

In all her experience nothing so startling, so horrifying, had ever happened as that telephone message from Morton. As long as she lived she would never forget the Archdeacon of Badakak. The mention of his name produced the effect which ought to have followed the mention of Jane Green, but did not.

'Of course if you've come about that——' she said, but still doubtfully.

'That's exactly what I have come about.'

'Well, I'll see.'

She went over to the telephone and fingered the little pegs which stuck in their holes with green wires attached to them. Even then, with the Archdeacon of Badakak in mind, she hesitated about disturbing Mr. Allworthy when he had a bishop with him. And yet there are those who say that the Church of England has failed to enforce discipline on its people. The charge is absurd. Would even an orderly clerk in a Prussian regiment be more unwilling to announce to an adjutant the arrival of a chance visitor?

Miss Simpson, of the C.E.E.C. inquiry office, might be timid, might be badly dressed, might be incapable of taking responsibility or facing a crisis, but it could not be said of her that she was undisciplined.

'Go on,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'What are you hesitating for?'

'I'm not sure if I ought to,' said Miss Simpson.

She was anxious, and no wonder. Mr. Allworthy, usually a calm man, had shown signs of serious annoyance after his telephone conversation with Morton. The Bishop of Barminster happened to be in the office at the moment, making arrangements for a series of lantern lectures in his diocese. He had at once dropped this important business and shut himself up with Mr. Allworthy. It would be little short of sacrilege to interrupt their conference. Yet this lady, who said that her name was Halliday but had no objection to being called Jane Green, said that she had something important to say about the Archdeacon of Badakak, and it was that archdeacon whom the bishop and Mr. Allworthy were discussing. Miss Simpson knew that and realized the importance of the business, for she had heard what Morton said about the 'missionary bug'. It was a very difficult situation.

'Perhaps', she said, 'you wouldn't mind coming into my office and sitting down just for a few minutes.'

This was a concession. The C.E.E.C. house has a waiting room into which visitors are put, and sometimes forgotten for hours. An invitation to sit in the inquiry office was a great advance on this treatment. Mrs. Halliday, if she accepted the invitation, could be supplied with almost any number of the society's reports, reading matter much more valuable than the *Tallers* and *Sketches* set out for waiters by doctors and dentists—not quite so interesting perhaps, but far more likely to stimulate high endeavour.

'If I go into your office at all,' said Mrs. Halliday,

'I'll take that telephone of yours straight away and ring up every single room in the house until I get the right one. I'll get it in the end, but it will be a shocking waste of time. You'd far better get it for me at once.'

She spoke as if she meant what she said and she looked as if she were capable of doing it. Miss Simpson gave in. She turned to the machine beside her, took a peg from one hole and put it into another, twiddled a pointer set on a dial, and then spoke.

'Mr. Allworthy! I'm very sorry to disturb you. . . . Yes. I know you told me not to, but . . . Yes. I know the bishop is with you; but there's a lady here. . . . But she won't wait.' There was real anguish in her voice as she spoke. 'I've told her that, but she won't. . . . I know she must, but she won't, and I don't know what to do. . . . Her name is Halliday, Mrs. Halliday.'

'Say Jane Green,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'She says it's not Halliday but Green,' said Miss Simpson.

'It's both,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'She says it's both,' said Miss Simpson, who was getting confused. 'Yes both. I really can't help it, Mr. Allworthy. . . . Of course she can't have two names. Nobody has. But that's what she says. . . . Very well, I'll ask her.'

She laid down the receiver and turned to Mrs. Halliday.

'Mr. Allworthy wants to know which is really your name. Is it Halliday or Jane Green?'

'Both. I told you that before.'

'I see,' said Miss Simpson, who was thinking the

thing out. 'Jane Green is your Christian name, and Halliday——'

'Millie Halliday. If we're going in for Christian names, let's get them right.'

Miss Simpson took up the receiver again.

'I think', she said, 'that it's either Millie Halliday Jane Green, or Jane Green Millie Halliday. Or it might be Jane Millie. . . . I beg your pardon. . . . Oh yes, I can hear all right. Only I thought. . . . No, I don't think so. Not what I'd call mad. At least she doesn't look it. But of course I can't be quite sure.'

Here Mrs. Halliday pushed open the door of the office, took Miss Simpson by the shoulders and slung her round. Then she picked up the telephone receiver.

'Look here,' she said, 'my name's Halliday, but my business name is Jane Green, and if you haven't heard it ask the bishop, he has. I made a dress for his daughter and he paid the bill. He must know who I am. I'm not in the least mad, though this girl of yours obviously is, or at least imbecile. My business is most important. I want to talk to you about the Archdeacon of Badakak. . . . Why didn't I say so sooner? I did. I've been saying it to this girl for the last half-hour. Yes. Of course I will. That's what I've been wanting to do all along.'

She laid down the receiver and turned to Miss Simpson.

'Show me the way up to Mr. Allworthy's office,' she said.

'Are you quite sure?' said Miss Simpson. 'The Bishop of Barminster is with him and he said he was not to be disturbed.'

'Don't argue,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Even if there are ten bishops with him I'm going up. In fact, the more bishops there are the better. It wouldn't surprise me if there had to be—— What is it you call it when all the bishops collect together? Not a General Council. General Councils are out of date. A Pan-Anglican Conference? That's it. I shouldn't wonder if there had to be a Pan-Anglican conference over this, so the sooner we get at it the better. Now be a good girl and show me the way to Mr. Allworthy's room at once. If you don't the bishop will jump on you afterwards. He wants to hear what I have to say, and he's probably excommunicating you at this moment for keeping him waiting. If he isn't doing it yet he soon will.'

This thought overwhelmed Miss Simpson and destroyed the last vestiges of her resistance. She led Mrs. Halliday upstairs and opened the door of Allworthy's office for her.

CHAPTER V

THE bishop leaned back in a deep leather-covered chair. His gaitered legs were crossed. His apron was spread smoothly and reached to his knees. His cincture, a broad band, lay unwrinkled though slightly strained across a stomach just portly enough for dignity, not so distended as to suggest habits of self-indulgence. Under his collar ran a thin band of purple silk. Round his neck by a gold chain hung a jewelled cross of the kind known as pectoral. His elbows rested on the arms of the chair. His hands were folded together across his chest. It was a gracious and yet dignified pose. The Bishop of Barminster never forgot to be gracious, nor did he forget that he sat of right among the peers of the realm in our upper legislative chamber.

The expression of his face, that alone, was out of harmony with his attitude. He looked troubled and there were wrinkles on his forehead which showed that he was seriously worried.

Mr. Allworthy sat at his writing-table. He was a lean man with a thin, eager face. It was easy to see that he was a hard worker, and not impossible to guess, even at the first glance, that he was an idealist, capable of enthusiasm. His attitude had none of the serenity achieved by the Bishop of Barminster. His face showed even more obvious signs of trouble.

Mrs. Halliday was shown in by the trembling girl. The bishop rose at once and greeted her with his accustomed courtesy.

'Mrs. Halliday,' he said, 'or should I say Jane Green? I confess that hitherto I have known you only as Jane Green. My elder daughter's presentation—you recollect perhaps. And now her sister—— So they come, treading on our heels, before we realize that they have ceased to be children. This', he made the introduction, 'is Mr. Allworthy, our secretary, our very able secretary. Mr. Allworthy may not know Jane Green, but he will be delighted to have the opportunity of meeting Mrs. Halliday.'

At the moment Allworthy did not look as if he were delighted about anything or as if he ever could be delighted about anything again. The bishop's face had cleared a little when Mrs. Halliday entered, the wrinkles on his forehead smoothed away by his instinctive courtesy. The look on Allworthy's face reminded him at once of their serious trouble. He became very grave, though he still remained suave.

'Won't you sit down, Mrs. Halliday?' he said.

With a gentle movement of his hand he suggested a chair, not quite so large as that in which he had sat himself; but still a chair of some dignity. Mrs. Halliday sat down. So did the bishop, renewing the attitude of crossed legs and folded hands. Only it was noticeable, a sign perhaps of agitation, that the hem of his apron was caught between his knees and his cincture slightly crumpled.

'I understand', he said, 'that you have come to see us about the Archdeacon of Badakak. Poor fellow, poor fellow! A most unfortunate business!'

Mrs. Halliday had come ready to make her confession fully and freely, prepared at any cost to herself to clear Simon. But she had not the least intention of incriminating herself, if by any other means she could save him. She intended to proceed cautiously, to find out exactly what had happened. There was still the bare possibility that Simon had not been caught smuggling. In that case there would not be the slightest reason for her confession.

'I thought perhaps', she said, 'that you'd be able to tell me where he is and if anything has happened to him.'

'Just so, just so,' said the bishop. 'A very natural inquiry, but——'

He looked at Allworthy, and it was Allworthy who said what was in the bishop's mind.

'Are you a sister of the archdeacon?'

'The unfortunate archdeacon,' said the bishop, 'our poor friend.'

'No,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Or cousin?' said Allworthy, 'or a member of his family, a relative of any kind?'

'No,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'simply a friend.'

Allworthy looked at the bishop, and, after a decent pause, the bishop spoke.

'You will understand, Mrs. Halliday, that it would scarcely be right for us to discuss our poor friend's affairs, his private affairs, with any one who is not in some sense his representative. Now a friend, as you will see——'

'An intimate friend,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'a very intimate friend.'

It was a fair claim to make. She had bathed with

Simon, playing the game of submarines in the warm blue water of the Mediterranean. She had spent long evenings with him in a night club kept by a Russian prince. She had sat with him in quayside cafés, drinking coffee and liqueur. Together they had listened to the prince's music. Together they had learned all about the Russian Church. Together they had admired Matinski's most exquisite creations. After such comradeship it is surely fair to claim a man as an intimate friend.

'Ah,' said the bishop, 'an intimate friend! Perhaps it would not be indiscreet to ask—the position is so serious that I feel justified in asking. Is there?—you said an intimate friend, Mrs. Halliday. Is there anything in the nature of an understanding, explicit or implicit, about a future relationship of a still closer kind?'

The question might have been regarded as an impertinence if asked by any one except a bishop. Perhaps even from a bishop Mrs. Halliday might have resented it, but with the thought in her mind of the confession she had to make it seemed a small thing to admit that her friendship with Simon had not reached the stage of love-making.

'If you mean, am I engaged to be married to him,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'I am not. Nothing of the sort. We are not that kind of friends at all.'

'Ah,' said the bishop. 'That being so you will not, I am sure, misconstrue what I say, as if it were an expression of want of confidence in you. No such feeling is present in my mind. None at all. But I hardly think we should be justified—— What do you say, Allworthy?'

'I don't see how we can discuss the archdeacon's affairs with Mrs. Halliday,' said Allworthy. 'The matter is too grave.'

'And so far,' said the bishop, '—so far there has been no publicity. In that sense, the limited sense of the absence of publicity, the matter may still be regarded as private.'

That, so far as it went, was a relief for Mrs. Halliday. If there had been no publicity things could not have gone very far. Perhaps something, the hoped-for something, might happen. Simon might escape and she would be saved the necessity of confessing. But she wanted to know a little more.

'I'm so glad to hear you say that,' she said. 'I was so dreadfully afraid that he had been arrested for smuggling. That is why I came here to-day and insisted on seeing Mr. Allworthy. I wanted to know if he had been, but if you say he hasn't—'

'I didn't say that,' said the bishop. 'I couldn't say that. I wish I could.'

'Then he has been,' said Mrs. Halliday.

The bishop and Allworthy looked at each other. The same thought was in both their minds. If Mrs. Halliday knew so much there could be no harm in telling her a little more. Indeed, some good might come of a frank discussion with her. She might know, or be able to guess, how Simon came to do such a thing. That had been a puzzle to the bishop since he first heard of the discovery. It had been an actual bewilderment to Allworthy, who knew the record of Simon's life. It seemed incredible that a man such as he was could suddenly, and apparently without adequate motive, offend in such a way. If Mrs.

Halliday could offer any explanation, even hint at anything that might suggest an explanation, it would be well to take her completely into their confidence.

'I fear', said the bishop, 'that he has been—not arrested, that is too strong a word, but detected in the act of smuggling.'

'And such things!' said Allworthy, in the voice of one deeply pained. 'If it had been scientific instruments or optical lenses, or—or even tobacco; but it was——'

'I don't know', said the bishop, 'that it makes it really worse; but it does unfortunately seem more scandalous and is without doubt more liable to give occasion to the enemy to blaspheme. He was detected in the act of smuggling women's clothes, garments of the most fashionable kind and'—here the bishop's voice became very grave—'garments of the most intimate nature, not usually worn, scarcely mentioned in public by English ladies.'

So the bishop had heard about the pyjamas. If the position had been anything but desperate Mrs. Halliday might have smiled at the idea that such things are not mentioned by English ladies. Those who move in episcopal circles may perhaps still possess the Victorian modesty, but among Mrs. Halliday's acquaintances there was no shrinking from the word pyjamas. But Simon's position was far too serious to leave her any inclination to laugh at the bishop.

'Will he go to prison?' she asked.

'I trust not,' said the bishop. 'I have every hope that we may be able to avert such a catastrophe as that. For the sake of the Church as well as for the sake of the

unhappy man himself, we shall use every endeavour—I shall use to the uttermost my private influence to avoid a penalty such as you suggest, indeed so far as possible, to prevent this unfortunate affair becoming a matter of newspaper publicity.'

That indeed was what the bishop and Allworthy had been discussing ever since Morton's telephone message reached them. Allworthy had a cousin among the high executive officers who served the Board of Customs and Excise. The bishop knew at least one of the commissioners. The Archbishop of Canterbury, if it were necessary to seek for his help, might put the case before the Chairman of the Board. On one thing the bishop could calculate hopefully. No one in high position wants to do anything to create an ecclesiastical scandal. These are by far the most objectionable scandals of all, even worse than shady finance among Cabinet Ministers, and unfortunately, just because they are so objectionable, newspapers prefer them to any other form of news. The bishop could foresee headlines and paragraphs which he shuddered to think of. But nobody, nobody except the readers and writers of newspapers, wants that particular kind of paragraph. The bishop could count on the help of all high officials in suppressing the miserable fall of the Archdeacon of Badakak. In particular he could count on the help of George Pennefather, an important man in the service of the Board of Customs and Excise. The bishop knew him, and what was better still, knew his aunt, Julia Countess of Newyd, an old lady devoted to the Church and a warm supporter of the C.E.E.C.

And the bishop felt that he had some good arguments

to urge in favour of leniency. In itself, apart from its effect on the Church, Simon's case was peculiar. The man had a blameless reputation, a long record of very noble service. He had somehow been betrayed into committing an offence, common enough among ordinary men and women, but almost inconceivable for a man like Simon Craven. Women's clothes! What would he have done with them if he had succeeded in smuggling them into England? How could he dispose of them in such a way as to make a profit? And it was almost as hard to think of Simon wanting to make a profit as to think of him smuggling silk pyjamas. The whole story of his life went to prove that he was indifferent to money, the very last person to be suspected of trying to make it in illegitimate ways.

All this had been said and re-said by the bishop to Allworthy, and by Allworthy to the bishop, while they consulted together. Continually the same puzzle recurred. Why had Simon done such a thing? What possible motive was there?

Then suddenly, while he was giving Mrs. Halliday his assurance, and holding out his gleam of hope, the bishop thought he saw the answer to his riddle. Mrs. Halliday claimed Simon as an intimate friend. Mrs. Halliday was a fashionable dressmaker, just the person to whom imported clothes might be very useful. The bishop knew little about the value of Paris models or the special measures taken by the Government to make their importing difficult and unprofitable. But he did know that there was a duty on silk, and he saw that it might be very convenient for Mrs. Halliday to evade it.

So that was it. The bishop saw, or thought he saw, just how it had happened. His first impulse was to wring from Mrs. Halliday a confession of her share in the affair. But the bishop was not a man who acted on impulse. For years it had been his rule to stop and think, to think twice, even three times, before doing anything, if possible before saying anything. Sometimes this policy of delay resulted in an opportunity passing without anything being done. In Badakak, owing to the ferocity of the wild creatures and the suddenness of their attacks, the bishop's plan would not have worked well. In England it did. And among his lordship's cherished maxims was one which taught him to 'deprecate precipitancy of action' on all occasions.

This wisdom saved him once more from what might have been a blunder. He considered the position before he spoke, and saw that a confession from Mrs. Halliday would make things worse instead of better. He wanted to save Simon from the consequences of his criminal folly if he could. But he wanted much more to save the C.E.E.C. from disgrace and the Church from scandal. Worldly men are all too eager to sneer at missionary societies, and profane men to speak evil of the Church. Would not the sneers be worse, and the evil speaking more bitter, if Mrs. Halliday's name were mixed up with Simon's? The discovery of ladies' dresses in a missionary's suit-case was bad enough. The discovery of a lady for whom they were meant was much worse. The bishop, with a shudder, foresaw still more appalling headlines in the daily papers. 'Missionary's Lady Friend.' 'Who were the Beach Pyjamas for?'

The bishop made his decision. He would not attempt to induce Mrs. Halliday to speak. He would, if possible, remain in ignorance of her partnership with the erring archdeacon. It would be better to accept the position as it was without adding fresh complications. And after all—the bishop was a charitable man and disinclined to think evil where perhaps none existed—after all, Mrs. Halliday might have nothing to do with the smuggling.

Mrs. Halliday could not have guessed what was passing through the bishop's mind, but her own decision harmonized very well with his. She was still prepared, at any cost to herself, to make her confession, but the bishop's words had reassured her. If all Mr. Allworthy's influence, all the bishop's influence, all the influence of a great missionary society, all the enormous influence of the Church, was to be used on Simon's behalf, it would be wise to wait a while before confessing anything. Simon might escape without a disgraceful appearance in the police court, without imprisonment, without the horror of publicity; with no worse a penalty than a fine paid privately. Mrs. Halliday was under no delusions about the fine. It would have to be paid, and would certainly be heavy. But she could pay that, or give Simon the money to pay it. So the whole thing would be comfortably settled without the necessity of her confessing.

But would it? Besides the civil law, whose worst penalties might be escaped, there was the ecclesiastical law. Mrs. Halliday knew nothing about that, but she was greatly afraid that an archdeacon caught smuggling might be severely dealt with. She had been troubled ever since she thought of it by the word 'un-

frocked'. What did it mean? What consequences would follow? Was it a public action, performed perhaps in St. Paul's Cathedral with . . . a dreadful phrase occurred to her—— 'Bell, book and candle'? Would bishops with bells, bishops with candles and bishops with books circle round the unfortunate Simon and curse him in long Latin words? Mrs. Halliday could not bear to think of such a ceremony.

'Will he be unfrocked?' she said desperately.

The bishop's thoughts at the moment were on silk dresses, not on serge cassocks. Frock, at the moment, suggested to him only the garments found in Simon's suit-case.

'Unfrocked? What do you mean?'

'Mean? I mean—well,' she looked at the bishop engagingly, 'what *do* I mean? You ought to know surely. Unfrocked does mean something, I suppose.'

This time the bishop understood her.

'You are thinking now', he said, 'about the effect of this unfortunate business on the archdeacon's position in the Church. That, Mrs. Halliday, is a matter I do not care to discuss with you.'

The original kindness of the bishop's manner had completely disappeared. The suspicion that Mrs. Halliday was responsible for the smuggling remained in his mind. He would not put it into words. But he was disinclined, as any bishop would be, to be friendly with a woman who had made a catpaw of an archdeacon. Mrs. Halliday might be and no doubt was an eminent dressmaker, but she had been guilty, if indeed she was guilty, of an unpardonable offence. No woman can be allowed to play fast and loose with the

reputations of archdeacons without incurring the displeasure of every conscientious bishop.

'But will he go on being an archdeacon?' said Mrs. Halliday.

'Madam,' said the bishop very sternly, 'Mr. Allworthy and I have a good deal to do and several important decisions to make. May I suggest——'

'Oh, I'll clear out if you want me to,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'It's been perfectly sweet of you to talk to me at all, and I can't tell you what a relief it is to my mind to know that you—you will do your best for the poor archdeacon, won't you? But of course you will. And if there's any question of a fine—there's almost sure to be, I'm afraid. When you know how much it is do let me know. I'll send you a cheque at once. Yes. I really mean it, and the archdeacon need never know who paid it. He's not likely to ask, for he never fusses about money; but if he does you could say that it comes out of some fund, couldn't you? Queen Anne's Bounty, perhaps. What is Queen Anne's Bounty? It sounds a generous sort of thing, and I don't suppose Simon knows anything more about it than I do. I should think you'd be perfectly safe in saying that Queen Anne's Bounty paid it for him. The one thing you really mustn't tell him is that the money comes from me. He wouldn't touch it if he knew that.'

Mrs. Halliday was a great deal more cheerful when she left Mr. Allworthy's room than she was when she entered it. The affair was arranging itself as well as possible. There would be no actual disaster and therefore no need for her confession. She bade Miss Simpson a friendly farewell and invited her to call at the Jane

Green showrooms whenever she wanted to see the latest thing in frocks.

Outside the door of the office she came on a policeman who was standing, with a very stern expression, beside a motor-car. Mrs. Halliday bade him a cheerful good day.

'Here, I say,' said the constable. 'Are you the owner of this car?'

It was a nice-looking car of moderate size, by no means what is called a sports model, but a car which any quiet middle-aged man might be pleased to own.

'No,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'I'm not. I wish I was.'

'You mightn't wish it so much if you were,' said the constable. 'There'll be a summons out against the owner for leaving it in a public street for two hours unattended.'

'Unattended! How frightfully funny! Ought there to be a nursery-maid to wipe its nose for it or a footman to bring it a cup of tea?'

'Unattended was what I said,' said the constable, 'and it won't be near so funny when I say it to the magistrate.'

'I'm afraid I shan't be there,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'But never mind. If you can't summons me you'll be able to summons some one else. Just keep your eye on the car. The owner is bound to turn up sooner or later.'

The constable grunted. He had every intention of keeping his eye on the car. He had had it 'under observation' for more than two hours. He would keep it 'under observation' for another two hours if

necessary. Burglars might burgle or murderers cut the throats of small children, but this constable was devoted to duty. Whatever happened he meant to keep his eye on the car till the owner appeared.

CHAPTER VI

THAT woman', said the bishop when Mrs. Halliday left the room, 'is at the bottom of the whole thing. I'm convinced of it.'

'It looks as if she had something to do with it,' said Allworthy. 'Otherwise it's difficult to account for her offering to pay the fine. There will be a fine, I suppose.'

'Sure to be,' said the bishop. 'If we get off with a fine we may be very thankful. I wonder if I ought to approach the archbishop at once.'

'Craven will be here in about an hour,' said Allworthy. 'He was to come up to London by the next train.'

'In charge of a policeman? I hope not in charge of a policeman.'

'So far as I could gather,' said Allworthy, 'he'll be—he'll be unattended.'

That, though Allworthy did not know it, was the position of the bishop's motor-car.

'Something to be thankful for,' said the bishop, speaking of course of Simon, not the car. Its unattended condition was not a cause for thankfulness.

'Perhaps before taking any further steps,' said Allworthy, 'it might be well to hear what Craven has to say.'

He still cherished a hope, by this time very faint indeed, that there might be some mistake.

'Of course,' said the bishop. 'Of course. If he has any explanation to offer we ought to hear it.'

But he shook his head. It did not seem possible that there could be an explanation.

'The things were found in his luggage,' he said, 'actually found there. What explanation can there be?'

'If only it had been something else,' said Allworthy wearily. 'Even brandy or rum.'

'Perhaps', said the bishop, 'he'll tell us how that woman persuaded him, what inducements she offered.'

'I don't believe', said Allworthy, 'that he'll say anything to incriminate her, especially as she seems to be a friend of his.'

'He ought to,' said the bishop. 'It seems to me a plain duty to lay the blame in the proper place.'

'But he won't. I know he won't. He's—he's quixotic.'

'How could he have got mixed up with her?' said the bishop. 'I thought you said he'd been twenty years in Badakak.'

'He has, and he has never come home once.'

'Then how did she get hold of him?'

'That', said Allworthy, 'we can only guess.'

It was an optimistic statement. Neither one nor other of them could guess, though they sat for nearly five minutes trying to. It was the bishop who broke the silence.

'I can't help feeling thankful now', he said, 'that I didn't give him that Barminster canonry. Things would have been worse if I had.'

‘ Mrs. Halliday—— ’

‘ That woman,’ said the bishop, correcting him.

So a watchful angel might have spoken of Eve after she persuaded Adam to eat the apple. So a loyal servant of King Solomon might have spoken of Pharaoh’s daughter and the Queen of Sheba when the worship of Baal and Ashtaroath became popular in court circles. So Mark Antony’s friends no doubt spoke about Cleopatra, and Cardinal Wolsey’s of Anne Boleyn, and—history abounds in such occasions of reproach.

‘ That woman ’, said Allworthy obediently, ‘ raised a difficult point when she spoke about Craven’s future. That will have to be considered once our immediate difficulties are surmounted.’

‘ He’ll have to go back to Badakak.’

‘ His health——’

‘ He ought to have considered his health ’, said the bishop, ‘ before he entangled himself with that woman.’

It was a real comfort to him to be able to shift the blame from the archdeacon’s shoulders on to those of one who held no official position in the Church. He was a man of kind heart, very little given to severe condemnation, even of notorious sinners, but it annoyed him greatly to think that Mrs. Halliday, who had brought reproach upon his beloved C.E.E.C. and his still more beloved Church, should be able to escape scot-free. Yet he saw no way of incriminating her without making the scandal worse than it was.

‘ No one in Badakak ’, said Allworthy hopefully, ‘ will ever hear of the smuggling if we succeed in keeping it out of the newspapers.’

‘ I don’t suppose ’, said the bishop, ‘ that the natives

would much mind if they did hear. Public opinion in the matter of smuggling is very lax, even in this country. In Badakak I don't suppose there's any public opinion at all.'

'Craven did a wonderful work there,' said Allworthy. 'He taught the people——'

'He can't have taught them that smuggling is wrong, for he evidently doesn't think it himself.'

After that there was another silence. There seemed little that could be said until Simon arrived. The bishop looked at the clock and then at his watch. They agreed. There was still a long wait before Simon could be expected.

'I suppose', said Allworthy, 'that there's no risk of Miss Code's presenting him to the parish of Brailton?'

'I don't think we need consider that possibility,' said the bishop. 'At one time I hoped to persuade her, but when that horse of hers broke down——'

'It didn't win the Derby then?' said Allworthy, who was not well up in sporting news. 'I somehow thought it had.'

'No,' said the bishop. 'It didn't even start. Something happened to its leg. That upset Miss Code so much that she wrote quite a curt reply to the last letter I sent her about Craven. I was annoyed at the time, but I'm glad now that things turned out as they have. It would have been very awkward for me if she had presented him. I should have felt obliged to refuse to institute him and that's a difficult thing to do.'

'Providence', said Allworthy, who was a sincerely pious man, 'works in a mysterious way. To us it

seems curious that an accident to a race-horse should save the Church from a serious scandal.'

The bishop for some reason which he could scarcely have explained, disliked the idea of crediting Providence with the remoter consequences of Miranda's strained muscle. He felt that many people might take the view that Providence ought to have adopted some other means, simpler and directer, of preventing Simon Craven being made rector of Brailton. Those who had put their money on Miranda in the earlier stage of the betting would have had a real grievance if Allworthy's view of Providence found general acceptance.

'I suppose', said Allworthy, 'that there's no risk of her changing her mind.'

'Not the slightest, I should say.'

'As a matter of fact', said Allworthy anxiously, 'I wrote to her again yesterday making a strong appeal on behalf of Craven. I was somehow under the impression that her horse had won the Derby and I thought it would be a favourable opportunity of getting her to agree to——'

'If you mentioned the Derby', said the bishop, 'you probably enraged her.'

'But of course I didn't mention it. In writing about such a subject I should not dream of mentioning a race-horse.'

'I don't expect she'll take the slightest notice of your letter,' said the bishop. 'She's not the sort of woman who changes her mind.'

There, as it turned out, the bishop was wrong. Elizabeth did change her mind, though not in consequence of Allworthy's letter.

Half an hour later Simon was shown into the room

by the trembling Miss Simpson. The bishop greeted him very sternly, which was quite right. A bishop ought to be stern to a clergyman, especially an archdeacon, who has been caught smuggling. Allworthy received him with glances of sorrowful reproach.

Simon was neither so dejected nor so shamed as the bishop expected. He was, as he knew, in a difficult position ; but he was upheld by a kind of martyr feeling. He was sacrificing himself, if not for the faith as he had sometimes hoped he might, at all events for somebody else.

In reply to the bishop he frankly admitted the facts. The garments were found in his possession and he had passed his word that he had nothing to declare. Beyond that he refused to go. It was in vain that the bishop demanded and Allworthy begged for some explanation of his motive. Simon would make no statement at all. He admitted, when pressed, that he knew Mrs. Halliday ; but he said emphatically that she had not asked him to smuggle the dresses, nor hinted at his doing so, nor offered him any kind of reward if he did. The bishop and Allworthy were puzzled, for it was quite plain that Simon was speaking the truth.

The interview was most unsatisfactory, leaving the bishop and Allworthy very much where they were before. They got no light whatever on Simon's motive. It appeared that Mrs. Halliday had nothing to do with the smuggling. That was the plain meaning of Simon's reiterated statements.

In the end the bishop pronounced a kind of judgement.

'We mean', he said, 'to use all our influence to

avoid the scandal of your appearance in a court of justice, but candidly, Mr. Archdeacon, we are not doing this for your sake. In my opinion you ought to be left to suffer the full penalties of your offence. We are taking the line we do take solely for the sake of the Church and the great missionary corporation whose agent you were.'

Simon bowed.

'Thank you, my Lord. I am glad for the Church's sake that you can act as you suggest. For my own part I am quite willing to accept any punishment which the Church or the State may inflict.'

Then he left the room, a little frightened, slightly depressed, but glowing with a sense of martyrdom, one of the most agreeable feelings there is. So agreeable that it is astonishing how few people care to enjoy it.

'In spite of all he said,' said the bishop, 'I'm convinced that that woman is somehow at the bottom of it.'

'I don't see how she can be,' said Allworthy. 'I'm sure Craven wasn't lying.'

'All the same she is,' said the bishop obstinately.

CHAPTER VII

ELIZABETH CODE, not this time in riding-breeches, but wearing a shabby summer frock, sat at her tea-table in the hall of Brailton Grange, the large hall with the deer-heads and antlers round it. It was a brilliantly fine afternoon and the tall windows stood wide open. The sun shone on the lawn outside where the flowers made patches of colour and a wide-branched cedar cast a dark shade. The proper place for tea on such an afternoon was under the cedar tree. Anybody with a sense of the picturesque would have had the table set there. But Elizabeth had little aesthetic feeling. Like most people who spend their time mainly out of doors she preferred the shelter of a roof at meal-times. It is the suburban dweller, not the pioneer, who craves for the discomfort of a dinner on a lawn. The pioneer has enough of that sort of eating in the course of his working life and finds no pleasure in fishing half-drowned flies out of his soup or killing wasps with teaspoons.

Elizabeth poured out a cup of tea and helped herself to a buttered scone. Then Duckward Kelmer came into the hall. It was Friday afternoon and he had come down to Brailton for the week-end. He was, as usual, exquisitely dressed, achieving by means of a brown suit and an olive-green tie just that hint of

rural peace which is so desirable in week-ending without suggesting that he wanted to shoot a bird of any kind or prance about on the back of a horse. Indeed, Duckward wanted no such thing. He was content to rest peacefully, talk amusingly and read the book of the moment.

Elizabeth poured out a cup of tea for him.

'Well, Duck,' she said, 'what's the latest scandal?'

'You can hardly call it a scandal', said Duckward, 'because it has been successfully hushed up, but while it lasted it was quite an amusing affair. I heard all about it from Pennefather. You know Pennefather, don't you? Nephew of old Julia.'

Elizabeth knew old Julia, the Dowager Countess of Newyd. She remembered that Julia's nephew served his country in an office, being one of the secretaries of the commissioners of the Board of Customs and Excise.

'You wouldn't think Pennefather was the sort of man to mix himself up with bishops,' said Duckward, 'but for the last week they've been swarming round him. One of the funniest sights I ever saw was Pennefather lunching with eight bishops in the Athenaeum.'

'I don't believe that,' said Elizabeth. 'It couldn't have happened.'

'Well, perhaps not eight.'

'And perhaps not lunch,' said Elizabeth. 'And perhaps not the Athenaeum.'

Duckward sighed.

'Why will you insist in spoiling a good story', he said, 'by quibbling about details? It would be far more convincing if you let me tell it in my own way. After all, how can truth be expressed—how has it ever

been expressed—except in the form of myths? Take any of the great religions of the world——’

‘That reminds me,’ said Elizabeth, whose ear caught the word ‘religion’, although she was not listening to Duckward’s exposition of the nature of myths. ‘Have you found a parson for me?’

‘I’m almost inclined to think I have,’ said Duckward.

‘I’m glad to hear it, I’m sick of getting letters recommending men whom I’m sure to dislike. Who’s your man?’

‘That’, said Duckward, ‘is what I’m trying to tell you, but you will keep cutting in with frivolous interruptions. Why will you say that Pennefather never lunched with a bishop? Whereas he did, last week, though it wasn’t at the Athenaeum.’

‘What’s Pennefather got to do with my parson?’

‘Nothing,’ said Duckward, ‘nothing at all, except that it was from him that I got the story. I mightn’t have heard it otherwise. Or at least I mightn’t have heard it for a long time. I suppose I should have heard it in the end. I rather pride myself on hearing everything sooner or later. I’d have been sorry to miss this story. So would you, Elizabeth. You’ll agree with me about that when you hear it. Especially as you’re more or less mixed up in it.’

‘I’m not,’ said Elizabeth. ‘I’m never mixed up in scandals.’

‘Indirectly you are,’ said Duckward, ‘and in the end you’ll be in it up to the neck. To begin with, you know the Bishop of Barminster, don’t you?’

‘Of course I do. Heaven knows I’ve had letters enough from him.’

‘Well, he’s the bishop that Pennefather lunched

with. And lunch wasn't the end of it. The bishop was at him for days afterwards, couldn't be kept out of the office, and raised Cain when he got in. Poor Pennefather was almost worn out. One day last week he was quoting poetry, Browning, if you can conceive such a thing. That shows you the state he's reduced to. "In they came, those people of importance." And they did.'

'I wish you'd get on with your story,' said Elizabeth, 'or at all events tell me what it's about.'

'I'm coming to that ; but before I do I want you to understand the position thoroughly.'

'I'm not likely to,' said Elizabeth, 'unless you stop babbling. Who's the parson you think you've got for me ?'

'Do you know a man called Allworthy. Kenilworth Allworthy, a Reverend, though not a bishop ?'

'I won't have Allworthy in Brailton,' said Elizabeth firmly.

'I wasn't dreaming of suggesting him,' said Duckward, 'though you might do worse. After all, he's a secretary, and as I told you before secretaries are always to be relied on for tact. You remember what the P.M. said about tact last week. It was at Chequers and some one was talking about miners' wages, and the Prime Minister said——'

'I'd as soon have the missionary archdeacon as him,' said Elizabeth.

She was not listening to the story of the party at Chequers. Her 'him' referred to Allworthy, not the Prime Minister.

'I'm just coming to the archdeacon,' said Duckward.

'You needn't. I've told the bishop half a dozen

times that I won't have a missionary archdeacon in Brailton.'

'Allworthy', said Duckward, 'has a cousin of some sort in Pennefather's office, a man called Kenilworth, which I suppose is how Allworthy got his Christian name. Or could it be the other way on? Perhaps the cousin got his surname from Allworthy. Anyhow there it is. Quite a good fellow I believe until he took to bothering the life out of Pennefather. He was hand-in-glove with the bishop. You see where we're getting to now, don't you?'

'No, I don't.'

'You will when I remind you that Pennefather is something in the Customs and Excise, quite a big noise there. It was old Julia put the bishop on to him. Bishops swarm round her, eating out of her hand and she simply loves them. Naturally enough, the Bishop of Barminster went straight to her when he saw the beastly hole he was in.'

'What hole? I don't believe the Bishop of Barminster was ever in a hole. He couldn't be.'

'If you weren't so frightfully impatient, Elizabeth, you'd get at things quicker. You really would. Where was I when you interrupted me? Oh, yes. The bishop, knowing that Pennefather was old Julia's nephew, went straight to her, which I'm bound to say was a sensible thing to do. Julia put him on to Pennefather at once. She wrote a letter practically telling Pennefather to do what the bishop wanted and to do it at once. Devilish hard on Pennefather, but there it is. These old women never consider other people's feelings. All the same it really would not have done to put an archdeacon in prison, would it?'

'What archdeacon? and what for?'

'Your archdeacon,' said Duckward. 'The man who comes from Java. Or was it Java? I remember thinking at the time that it must be Java or Borneo because it ended in ak.'

'Are you talking about the Archdeacon of Badakak?'

'That's the bird. I'd forgotten the name, but I recollect it now you say it.'

'I'm not likely to forget it,' said Elizabeth. 'I must have had fifty letters about him. But it's no use the bishop trying to work it through Julia Newydd or her nephew or any one else.'

'How frightfully suspicious you are, Elizabeth. That's not what the bishop was doing at all.'

'Anyhow I won't have him.'

'You'll change your mind. I know you will when you've heard the story.'

'I don't believe there is a story.'

'Yes, there is, a splendid story, absolutely original. Pennefather said he'd never come across anything like it before and he's had years of experience. What do you think they caught the archdeacon at? Smuggling.'

'Rubbish! Archdeacons don't smuggle.'

'This one did though, on a pretty big scale too. Just think of it, Elizabeth. Here he comes, straight from the wigwams of the innocent heathen, dressed up in an apron and gaiters with a face that any saint might be proud of. Pennefather said he never saw anything so holy. St. Francis in a stained glass window wasn't in it with him. Pennefather says he'd have betted pounds any day that the man had never in his life done anything wrong. But what do you think

he had with him? Trunks and trunks full of—I'll give you three guesses, Elizabeth.'

'Go on. I hate guessing.'

'Women's clothes. Evening gowns. Old Julia, who knows something about clothes, though she does go in for bishops, saw some of them. She said they must have come straight from Matinski's. You know—the Russian princess woman who runs the dress-making place. Models—isn't that what you call them?'

'I don't believe it,' said Elizabeth. 'How could he possibly have got them?'

'And that's not all. Pyjamas. Beach pyjamas. The custom-house people haven't made such a haul for years. Naturally they were all for a prosecution. Case brought up in court. Gaol for the archdeacon. Horrible scandal. That's where the bishop came in. And Allworthy, of course, working his cousin Kenilworth all he could. Anything to avoid the worst ecclesiastical scandal of our time.'

'Do you know,' said Elizabeth, 'I'm beginning to rather like that archdeacon.'

'I thought you would when you heard the story.'

'He's evidently a man of some spirit.'

'Hot stuff,' said Duckward. 'I don't believe there's another archdeacon on the bench—are archdeacons on benches—I must ask some one about that. It's a thing one ought to know. Anyhow, there can't be many archdeacons who'd do it. Matinski models! And everybody thought he'd been converting the heathen! Well, well. One half of the world doesn't know how the other half lives. I'd never have guessed that archdeacons made their money that way.'

‘What’s happened to him? Is he in prison?’

‘Oh no. Pennefather worked it somehow. He told me the bishop wouldn’t let him alone till he did, and of course old Julia has a tidy bit to leave when her time comes. Pennefather couldn’t afford to offend her and the Kenilworth man said his cousin’s heart was giving way under the strain. Besides, nobody wants that kind of scandal. Washing linen in public, you know! And surplices are so much dirtier than any other linen if they’re dirty at all. They managed to hush it up. There was a fine, of course, a pretty stiff one. It ran into hundreds, I believe. But that was paid up at once. Pennefather said Queen Anne’s Bounty paid it. It doesn’t sound likely to me, but something the bishop said made me think it was Queen Anne. Those fellows do queer things with their money anyhow. There was a case I heard of, some time in the eighteenth century, when they gave hundreds to a Greek Patriarch to persuade him to go home. He came over here from Smyrna or somewhere, with a secretary and two archimandrites and a cook. He made a perfect nuisance of himself for years, boring the Archbishop of Canterbury stiff, and expecting to be fed, with his whole retinue. Nobody minded a dinner or two, but when it came to feeding the party continuously it was a bit thick. And the man wouldn’t go.’

‘What are you talking about now, Duck?’

‘Queen Anne’s Bounty. I’m trying to explain to you how it was that they paid the archdeacon’s fine—if they did, which I doubt. But they might have. They certainly handed over hundreds to that Patriarch. That’s what makes me think they may have paid up

for your archdeacon. Anyhow, the fine was paid and the whole thing hushed up. I don't suppose there are a dozen people in London who know the story. The dresses and pyjamas and things were all burned, by the public hangman or some one of that sort. I must find out whether it is the public hangman who burns smuggled cigars and so forth. It's a thing a fellow ought to know. Anyhow, they were burned, unless old Julia managed to snaffle one or two. She would if she could, and of course they'd be worth having even if she couldn't wear them herself. I can't quite see old Julia in beach pyjamas. Can you?'

'I shall write to the bishop to-day', said Elizabeth, 'telling him that I'm going to present that archdeacon to Brailton parish.'

'I thought you would when you heard that story.'

'He's just the kind of man I want here. Fine adventurous spirit. It's men like that——'

'Who made England what it is,' said Duckward. 'I've always thought so. Look at Drake. Look at Warren Hastings. Not smugglers, of course, but the same spirit.'

'Exactly,' said Elizabeth, 'and we want more of that spirit. Ring the bell, Duck, and tell them not to send the letters to the post till I've written to the bishop.'

CHAPTER VIII

IT was Tuesday morning, and Duckward Kelmer's pleasant week-end at Brailton Grange was nearly over. He sat, after breakfast, in his favourite chair, reading *The Times* very much as he had sat on the morning in April when the letter arrived from the bishop which caused Elizabeth to say 'Damn'.

Elizabeth, just as on that earlier morning, was at her desk answering letters and dealing with accounts. This time she was rather longer than usual, owing to the difficulty of disentangling a confusion in the accounts of the farm bailiff and those of the gardener. The whole dispute turned on manure. The gardener claimed to be entitled to all the manure he wanted and appended an indignant note to his accounts, pointing out the impossibility of growing early potatoes without manure. The farm bailiff admitted that the gardener was entitled to an unlimited quantity of stable manure, but held that any farmyard manure he used should be credited to the farmyard account and debited to that of the garden. The gardener, who suffered from a difficulty in distinguishing between credits and debits, held that manure ought not to be brought into either account at all. The bailiff, who said he had learned book-keeping at school, sneered at his way of keeping accounts. It remained for Elizabeth to straighten the matter out, a thing very difficult to do, since neither

the gardener nor the bailiff knew how much manure of either kind had been used for the new potatoes.

Elizabeth, a conscientious woman, went into the thing thoroughly, and it took her so long that Duckward had read the whole *Times* before she finished her work. He picked up another morning paper, an engaging publication, much more spirited if slightly less reliable than *The Times*. It contained a piece of news which the older and graver paper had omitted.

'Bishop in a Police Court.' That was the headline which caught Duckward's eye. If he had gone on to read the story under it he would have learned that the Bishop of Barminster had been summoned for leaving his car unattended for more than two hours in a street not scheduled as a parking-place. The magistrate, who seemed to be a man of unlegal mind, dealt sharply with the policeman who brought the charge against the bishop. 'You'd be better occupied', he said, 'in catching burglars than harassing respectable members of society.' He then let the bishop off under the First Offenders' Act, and there the matter closed. It was neither important nor interesting, though the headline made it look as if it was both.

'These clerical scandals', said Duckward, 'are becoming far too numerous.'

Elizabeth, absorbed in the manure dispute, paid no attention.

'This time', said Duckward, glancing at the paragraph below the headline, 'it's your friend the Bishop of Barminster.'

Elizabeth was aroused to interest.

'What's he been doing?' she said.

Duckward read the paragraph through.

'Nothing very bad,' he said. 'In fact, according to the magistrate, it's the policeman, not the bishop, who should have been in the dock. By the way, are you put in a dock in cases like this? Police Court cases of motoring offences. Perhaps not. That's one of the things a man ought to know. I must make inquiries. I'm often surprised at the number of things I don't know, although I am an unusually well-informed man.'

He handed the paper to Elizabeth while he spoke.

'I entirely agree with the magistrate,' she said.

If the magistrate had known exactly where and why the bishop left his car he might have spoken even more strongly than he did. The offence was committed on the day when the news of Simon's smuggling reached the office of the C.E.E.C. It was because he was engaged in making plans to avoid a scandal that the bishop remained so long in the office, and forgot that he had left his car in the street outside.

'The bishop can't have liked being called a first offender,' said Duckward. 'I daresay the magistrate couldn't get out of it any other way—— Still for a bishop—— It sounds so like a small boy with a catapult. If I were a bishop I'd almost rather be fined.'

Then, by an odd chance, the butler opened the door and announced the Bishop of Barminster. It was early in the day, too early for a merely friendly call. Elizabeth realized that the bishop had come on business, probably important business. Duckward slipped unobtrusively from the room, after greeting the bishop respectfully. He remembered what the Prime Minister had said about tact at Chequers during the week-end when some one brought up the subject of miners' wages.

'I hope', said the bishop, 'that I haven't come at an inconvenient hour. I know it's very early.'

'It's after ten,' said Elizabeth, 'and I'm always delighted to see you at any hour.'

'Thank you,' said the bishop, 'thank you. I really would have not come so early unless—— But I dare say you can guess what brings me.'

'Yes?' said Elizabeth.

She thought she could guess, but it seemed better to let the bishop explain.

'The Brailton vacancy,' said the bishop. 'I got your letter on Saturday and I wanted to see you about it. Sunday is an impossible day for me. On Monday I had to be in London, unavoidable business.'

Elizabeth thought of the Police Court and nodded.

'So I seized the very earliest possible moment on Tuesday morning. You wrote to me that you were prepared to present the Rev. Simon Craven——'

'That's what you wanted me to do, wasn't it?' said Elizabeth.

'Quite so. Quite so. I did suggest it.'

'Exactly. And I'm so glad to have been able to do what you wished.'

'I feel deeply,' said the bishop, 'profoundly grateful to you. This deference to my wishes is most gratifying. But unfortunately since I wrote to you facts have come to my knowledge which make it definitely undesirable that Mr. Craven should become a beneficed clergyman in the Church of England. You will, I hope, accept my assurance on this point without requiring me to give you details of what is a very painful case.'

'If you mean that smuggling business,' said Elizabeth, 'I know all about it already. I knew all about

it before I wrote to you offering to present the archdeacon.'

The bishop was startled.

'But, Miss Code, my dear Miss Code,' he said, 'if you really know—I can't imagine how the story reached you, but if you really know about this unhappy man's offence, you surely can't want to have him as rector of the parish. There is no doubt about the facts. I may almost say he confessed. At all events he attempted no denial, made no excuse, offered no kind of explanation.'

'That's just what made me offer him the living,' said Elizabeth. 'I like a man with some spirit whether he's a clergyman or not.'

'But—but—do you know what he smuggled?'

'Women's clothes,' said Elizabeth, 'Paris models of evening dresses chiefly.'

'Exactly. And in the face of that you still wish—Miss Code, you can't be serious.'

'Now look here, Bishop,' said Elizabeth. 'Let's get this plain and straight. You'll agree with me that there are far too many laws in England. The country's crawling with them. You can't so much as go to bed at night without being bitten by one, and Keating's Powder isn't a bit of use. I'm sure you agree with me about that.'

The bishop was still a little sore about his treatment by the officious policeman, and he suffered a sharp pang whenever he remembered that he had been branded as a 'First Offender'. He felt that there was something to be said for Elizabeth's opinion about laws.

'Up to a point,' he said cautiously, 'up to a certain

point, I'm almost inclined to think that there may be something in what you say.'

'Very well then, what is the plain duty of a good citizen, whether he's a parson or not? Why, to break as many laws as he conveniently can as often as he can. You follow me there, don't you?'

But the bishop did not. It was hardly to be expected that he would. In spite of mild assertions of independence in dealing with new prayer-books and such things, our bishops may be counted on to support the view that laws exist to be obeyed, not broken.

'Certainly not,' he said. 'So long as a law is a law it's our duty to obey it. Anything else would be anarchy, sheer anarchy.'

Instead of saying anything in reply, Elizabeth picked up the paper which lay on the floor beside her chair. She folded it so that the 'Bishop in a Police Court' paragraph was plainly visible. Without speaking a word she handed it to the bishop.

'My goodness!' he said.

He had not seen the headline before and it startled him.

'Anarchy,' said Elizabeth, 'sheer anarchy.'

It will be reckoned hereafter as righteousness to the Bishop of Barminster, it ought to be given prominence in his biography when that is written, that he burst into a hearty and unaffected laugh. Years of episcopal self-suppression, earlier years of clerical submission to the conventional, dropped off him in an instant. He was an undergraduate again, even a schoolboy. All his natural frankness, all his old appreciation of a joke, came back to him. He laughed.

'I thought you'd see it,' said Elizabeth. 'That's why I've always liked you, Bishop. You can see things straight if you'll only let yourself.'

But the bishop—— He had laughed, but he was still a bishop.

'I'll call myself an anarchist if you like,' he said, 'but you must admit—— Come now, Miss Code, even with your view of law you must admit that there's some difference between an unintentional breach of an arbitrary regulation and a moral offence.'

'I'm not talking about the Ten Commandments,' said Elizabeth. 'I give in to you about them. They're all right. But this smuggling! You can't call that wrong.'

The bishop might have argued that point and got the better of the argument, but he was not sure that he would convince Miss Code. He preferred to fall back on another objection to Simon Craven.

'Unfortunately,' he said, 'there is more in it than simple smuggling. I have no formal proof of what I am going to say, but I am convinced—in fact, it is only too clear—Mr. Craven is entangled with a woman whom I can only describe as undesirable. You know perhaps that he was called upon to pay a fine, a very large fine. We managed to avoid publicity, but the fine was enforced. Do you know who paid it?'

'Queen Anne's Bounty, wasn't it?'

Again the bishop laughed, and as before became less episcopal in laughing.

'My dear Miss Code! Do you really imagine that Queen Anne's Bounty——?'

'I don't see why not,' said Elizabeth. 'If they bribed a Greek Patriarch to stop sitting on the steps of

Lambeth Palace they might very well have paid a fine for an archdeacon.'

The bishop was not a deep student of eighteenth-century ecclesiastical history and never heard about Queen Anne's Bounty and the Patriarch. The thing seemed unlikely, but he was not prepared to say that it had not happened. The managers of Queen Anne's Bounty, as the bishop knew, are like the prophet Habbakuk, capable of anything, but he was quite certain that they had not paid Simon's fine.

'I assure you——' he said.

'If they didn't, then you did,' said Elizabeth, 'out of some fund or other.'

It is a settled belief among lay people that bishops and indeed all clergy have at their command enormous sums of money described vaguely as funds, with which they can do anything they choose.

'The fine', said the bishop, 'was paid by a woman, a woman concerned in this smuggling business, whose tool Simon Craven undoubtedly was. I see no reason why I should not tell you who she is. Jane Green, a well-known London dressmaker.

'Millie Halliday!' said Elizabeth. 'You really have surprised me, Bishop. Millie Halliday! But if it's Millie Halliday——'

'I said Jane Green,' said the Bishop.

'Millie Halliday is Jane Green, and if it's her you can drop that whole "undesirable woman" part of the business once for all. Millie isn't a bit undesirable. She's the very last woman in London who'd think of seducing an archdeacon. I always knew she'd plenty of spirit; but there's not a bit of real harm in her. So she paid the fine, did she?'

'She handed over the whole sum in Bank of England notes,' said the bishop.

'Then I suppose she was in it. In the smuggling I mean, but if Millie has anything to do with it you may take my word for it that it was perfectly all right.'

'But smuggling,' said the bishop. 'How can you say——'

'You're a very hard man to convince, but I should have thought that after—— Where's that newspaper? It's no use your putting it in your pocket and carrying it away. There are plenty more copies.'

'I wouldn't do anything so foolish.'

'That poor archdeacon', said Elizabeth, 'is a first offender too. But he didn't get off.'

'He did. Your friend paid the fine.'

'And you'll let me have him for rector here?''

'That', said the bishop, 'is another matter altogether. There I must be——'

'Now don't say firm. I can't bear it if you say firm, just as we're getting everything settled so nicely.'

But the bishop, though he refrained from saying so, was firm. He even threatened, though doubtful about his power of fulfilling the threat, to refuse to institute Simon Craven.

'Well,' said Elizabeth, 'I'll see Millie Halliday. I'll get the whole truth out of her, even if I have to flay her alive, and I'll tell it to you as soon as I've got it. All I ask you is to keep an open mind till I've told you all the facts.'

CHAPTER IX

‘**N**OW, Millie,’ said Elizabeth, ‘tell me all about it from beginning to end.’

She and Mrs. Halliday were together in the little office behind the fitting-rooms of Jane Green’s dressmaking establishment.

‘I want the whole story,’ said Elizabeth firmly.

She did not say exactly what story she wanted, and Mrs. Halliday, if she had been a less intelligent woman, might have fenced with the demand by giving an account of her holiday in Corsica with descriptions of the Calvi scenery. Or, since Elizabeth took an interest in Betty, she might have given a long account of the girl’s health, ending with the news that her lungs were perfectly sound. But Mrs. Halliday knew her patron and benefactor better than to dodge. She understood exactly what Elizabeth wanted and knew that sooner or later she would have to give a full account of her smuggling. Nevertheless, for the story was a difficult one to tell, she hesitated.

‘Come now,’ said Elizabeth. ‘Out with it. I can’t have my house overrun by bishops in the early hours of the morning, talking about things I don’t understand and calling you an undesirable woman. I don’t like it, Millie.’

‘Well,’ said Mrs. Halliday, feeling about for a good starting point. ‘There’s an old Russian prince in

Calvi, a perfect pet, though addicted to music and perhaps a little too fond of beer.'

'Skip him,' said Elizabeth. 'I'm not interested in Russian princes. What I want to get at is an English archdeacon.'

'He's a pet too. A lamb.'

'An uncommonly spirited lamb, by all accounts. If half what the bishop says is true, he must be far ahead of any other archdeacon in nerve and daring.'

'But he's not,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'He's quite the opposite. I should call him a timid creature.'

'He smuggled or tried to smuggle a whole boxful of Paris model frocks. I don't know whether that's your idea of a timid creature. It's not mine.'

'But he didn't know he was doing it,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'That's the whole point. It all began by my finding out quite accidentally that he had a suit-case exactly like mine and that the same key fits them both. I'd lost my key and all my money was locked up. It turned out that Simon's——'

'Who's Simon?'

'The archdeacon,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Anybody would call him Simon after knowing him for a week. He's that kind of man—more like a child really.'

'So you offered him kisses and a percentage on the profits. You always had a business instinct, Millie.'

'I didn't offer him either. I shouldn't dare to. And it wouldn't have been the least use if I had. If you offered him a bribe he'd walk away without speaking a word, and if you tried to kiss him he'd probably cry. He knew nothing about the smuggling.'

'How did you get the dresses packed into his suit-case without his knowing it?'

'They weren't in his suit-case.'

'They were. The custom-house officer found them there.'

'That was my suit-case,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I told you he had one exactly like it. All I did was change cases on the deck of the steamer just before we landed. It seemed as nearly safe as anything in the world can be. I've seen men like Simon walk through the customs time after time without having their luggage looked at. They'd search my luggage——'

'They always search mine,' said Elizabeth.

'But when they come to a perfectly innocent lamb like the archdeacon they take his word for it that he has nothing dutiable. I'd have betted a hundred to one that they wouldn't ask him to open a case. Then it was an even chance if they did ask him to open one that it would be his own case and not mine.'

'I see,' said Elizabeth. 'It was a sound gamble. But nothing in this world is really safe. Look at Miranda.'

'But I made it safer still. I bought two pairs of cotton trousers and packed them up on top of the dresses. I don't see what more I could have done.'

'You might have put in a surplice or a cassock,' said Elizabeth. 'That would have been safer than trousers.'

'I thought of that. But I couldn't get them in Calvi. Unless I had sneaked out in the middle of the night and looted a church I couldn't have got an ecclesiastical vestment of any kind.'

Elizabeth thought things over for a moment.

'Where did the dresses come from?' she asked.

'Matinski hasn't got a branch shop in Calvi, has she?'

'That's what I wanted to tell you first of all,' said

Mrs. Halliday, 'but you stopped me as soon as I mentioned the prince.'

'Go on with him now. I want the whole thing.'

Mrs. Halliday told the story of the prince, the impoverished princess and the mannequin.

'It was a chance,' she said, 'the sort of thing that doesn't turn up twice in a lifetime. I bought the things cheap, and if I could have got them into England they would have been worth hundreds.'

'As things turned out', said Elizabeth, 'it cost hundreds.'

Mrs. Halliday sighed.

'It did,' she said. 'I'm pretty nearly dead broke. But what else could I do? I couldn't leave him to pay up, but I had to be frightfully careful. If he'd had the least idea that I was paying the money he wouldn't have taken it. He thinks it was Queen Anne's Bounty. I persuaded the bishop to tell him so.'

'What I don't understand yet,' said Elizabeth, 'what utterly beats me is why the man didn't say that the suit-case wasn't his. He must have known perfectly well that it was yours. He'd only got to say so. Why didn't he?'

'That's the kind of man he is,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'He'd consider it unchivalrous to give away a woman.'

'He must be a fool.'

'A saint.'

'Same thing, isn't it?' said Elizabeth. 'You may say he's a saint, but a man who does a thing like that for a strange woman is what I'd call a fool.'

'I wasn't quite a stranger. We'd rather made friends. He taught Betty to dive, and we used to play games together in the water. We had our meals at the

same table together in the hotel, and then there were the evenings in the prince's club.'

'You must have kissed him,' said Elizabeth. 'No man would do a thing like that for a woman unless she'd kissed him.'

'I didn't,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'Never. Not once.'

'Then the sooner you do the better. You owe it to him.'

'I wouldn't mind kissing him in the least,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I'd like it. But he wouldn't let me. I assure you—— I know him and you don't. He'd be frightfully shocked if I kissed him.'

'Not if you went about it the right way.'

'There is no right way with a man like that.'

'There is a right way. Now listen to me, Millie. You've got yourself into a nasty mess and you've pretty well ruined what was a flourishing business.'

'I know that,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I had to borrow from the bank to pay the fine, and I don't believe they'd have advanced another penny.'

'When the smuggling story comes out—and it's bound to come out in the end—the business will go phut altogether.'

'I'm afraid it will. But what could I do? I'm frightfully sorry and I know it's hard on you. Still, I think, whatever happens, the business will be worth whatever you put into it. If I sell out you'll get your money back.'

'Don't be a fool, Millie, I don't care if I never get a penny of my money back. What I'm trying to get at is what's going to happen to you next. If you've any sense you'll do exactly what I tell you.'

So far Elizabeth had not told her to do anything

except kiss Simon, and she didn't see how that would help her out of her difficulties. The bank would not regard a kissed archdeacon as collateral security for an overdraft. No bank would. And when the smuggling story became public, kisses would make it worse, certainly not better.

'Since you went abroad', said Elizabeth, 'I've been pestered by bishops and secretaries asking me to appoint a missionary archdeacon to my parish.'

'Not Simon?'

'Yes, your Simon—Archdeacon of Badakak or some such place.'

'That is Simon,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'I refused. I kept on refusing. That wasn't the kind of man I cared to have in Brailton. I wanted more of a sportsman, the kind of parson who'd know a horse from a jennet.'

'Simon never would,' said Mrs. Halliday hopelessly.

It seemed that Simon had not a single quality that would appeal to Elizabeth. Then, suddenly she remembered something.

'But he can swim beautifully,' she said.

'Swim!' said Elizabeth. 'What's the use of swimming in a place like Brailton? There's nothing deeper than a duckpond in the whole parish.'

'I suppose not.'

'Then', said Elizabeth, 'Duckward Kelmer told me the smuggling story. When I heard that I felt sure that he was the kind of man I wanted. I wrote to the bishop saying I'd appoint him.'

'I'm so glad,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'But the bishop objected,' said Elizabeth. 'He came bounding over to the Grange when I'd only just

finished breakfast, and said he couldn't possibly agree to accept a convicted smuggler who was mixed up with an undesirable woman.'

'Bishops shouldn't say things like that. I'm not an undesirable woman.'

'I knew it wasn't true,' said Elizabeth, 'in the sense in which the bishop used the word, so I came to you to find out what was true.'

'And I told you.'

'Yes. And now it turns out that your Simon is just what I always supposed he was, what you call a saint, what I call a fool. In fact, he's worse than I thought. He let himself in for smuggling without knowing what he was doing and when he got caught he hadn't the sense to say it was your suit-case.'

'I think it's rather fine of him,' said Mrs. Halliday.

'And he hadn't even the gumption to kiss you,' said Elizabeth, 'though by your own account you gave him every opportunity and encouragement. Now that is most emphatically not the kind of man I want in Brailton.'

'But you will appoint him, won't you? It would be such a splendid thing for him. He'd be perfectly happy, and I'm sure you'd like him in the end.'

'What I've got to think of', said Elizabeth, 'is not what will make him happy, but what's for the good of the parish. That's what the bishop's been saying all along.'

'But Simon would be good for any parish. And it isn't as if he couldn't do anything except swim. If you only knew how he fought crocodiles and jaguars and anacondas, whatever they are, you'd know he is a most frightfully brave man.'

'There aren't any crocodiles in Brailton, so that's no use. But I will appoint him, on two conditions. The first is that you tell the bishop the whole smuggling story from start to finish. The bishop has a conscience, Millie, though you and I haven't, and unless he's convinced that that archdeacon is perfectly innocent he won't let me appoint him. It will have to be made clear that he didn't know what he was doing, and that you didn't bribe him in any way—*any* way. That's true, isn't it?'

'Quite. He didn't in the least know what he was doing.'

'Very well, that will satisfy the bishop, or it ought to. But he's not the only person who has to be satisfied. I have to be. I want a rector with some go in him, some spirit. If I can't get that—and it appears to be very difficult—I must have a man with a really outrageous wife. If you marry him, Millie, I'll appoint him.'

'Marry him?'

'Yes. Apart from any other consideration a man of that sort ought to be married by some woman who's able to look after him. It's quite obvious that he can't look after himself. If he's fool enough to let you trap him into smuggling some other woman will trap him into something worse, unless he's married and properly looked after.'

'Betty would rather like it,' said Mrs. Halliday thoughtfully.

'So would you,' said Elizabeth, 'though how you could possibly have fallen in love with a missionary archdeacon beats me.'

'I haven't fallen in love with a missionary archdeacon,' said Mrs. Halliday.

What she meant was that she had not fallen in love with the kind of man she thought a missionary archdeacon was sure to be. She was not prepared to deny that she had fallen in love with Simon who was—all sorts of things, a model of chivalry among others. It was indeed his sacrifice of himself to save her which had completed Mrs. Halliday's fall—into love.

'I told you ten minutes ago', said Elizabeth, 'that you could kiss him if you went the right way about it. Well, that is the right way. Even an archdeacon can't object to being kissed by his wife.'

'But he hasn't asked me,' said Mrs. Halliday, 'and I don't suppose he ever will.'

'Don't be a fool, Millie. If he doesn't ask you, you'll have to ask him. That's all.'

'I suppose I might. I have to write to him to-day, anyhow.'

'Oh, you're writing to him, are you? Why didn't you say so at once?'

'But not to ask him to marry me,' said Mrs. Halliday. 'I really hadn't thought of that. There's his suit-case, you see, the one I took when I left him mine. I want to ask him where he'd like to have it sent.'

'You can put in a P.S.,' said Elizabeth, 'saying you want to marry him. I'll write by the same post offering him the parish and then he'll know that he'll have something to marry on.'

'I wonder', said Mrs. Halliday thoughtfully, 'how I'll get on as a parson's wife. It's not a thing I ever thought of being. Shall I have to be frightfully proper?'

'That's exactly what you're not to be,' said Elizabeth. 'If I thought you were going to be frightfully

proper I wouldn't give your Simon the parish. I want you to shock the people into some sort of vitality, teach them to break laws, drink beer at illegal hours, refuse to send their children to school, take tickets for the Irish Sweep, do any blessed thing except sit still and be good.'

'But wouldn't I have to——?'

'Oh, if you want to do anything of that sort', said Elizabeth, 'you can start a dressmaking class for the Women's Institute and teach them to make beach pyjamas for Sundays.'

